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# SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 607. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 18TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.


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# SHORT STORIES

No. 607.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending Aug. 18th, 1900.

# A Desperate Remedy.

"DOES not the end justify the means? And yet—and yet——"

Arnold Mervyn could find no conclusion to his thought better than a sigh. He was standing at the window of his library, looking out on the lawn. Here a significant group of three had fixed his attention for the past half-hour. It consisted of a handsome young man and two girls; the one blonde, the other of a dark brunette type. A subtle air of rivalry between the two latter pervaded the scene, and would have been apparent even to a casual observer.

Just now the fair-haired girl was decidedly at a disadvantage. She was alone on the tennis-court, idly tossing the ball to and fro.

A moment before Claude Evans had been at her side. But he had left her to steal behind a rustic seat, and shake down a shower of blossoms about a dark head, and to bend over a laughing upturned face.

It was this position of affairs which had more than all disturbed the unseen looker-on, and stirred thoughts which had been often in his mind of late.

"It is only too easy to see how it will end," Mervyn told himself wretchedly. "Oh my Greta, my love."

He turned away from the window, and dropped into a chair by his desk, his head resting against his hand.

He remained quite motionless in the same attitude, without again glancing out of the window, or a long time—how long he did not exactly know. But he was aroused by a light rustle behind him; and then a pair of soft dark eyes looked over his shoulder into his own and a voice said in his ear:

"One would fancy you were planning some crime, cousin Arnold."

A tremor passed over him at her nearness, but at her words he drew away, as if with an almost guilty sensation.

"I was thinking of you, Greta," he responded, in a moment, and regarded her searchingly.

"Have I done anything to offend you?" she asked, with quick, affectionate concern. "How could you be thinking of me with such a murderous expression, dear Arnold?"

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"I am not offended, only worried," he returned, evasively.

Then, looking away from her, he asked, abruptly: "Have your friends gone?"

Greta drew herself up with an air of elation.

Her tone had the same quality, as she replied:

"Bella has gone. She went some time ago."

"Mr. Evans did not accompany her then."

"No doubt she expected that he would, but he—didn't. He is in the drawing-room. He—would like to speak to you, cousin Arnold."

Mervyn had opened his desk, and now let the lid fall with a crash. He was quite pale as he said:

"I cannot imagine what Mr. Evans can possibly have to say to me."

Greta blushed and pouted.

"You are not often so obtuse. As my guardian, you ought to be prepared for such things. I believe this isn't the first time it has happened. Only it is different now, because—well, Claude and I are engaged."

"Why are you so silent?" she queried, after waiting in vain for a response. "I thought you would be delighted. I wanted to be the first to tell you."

At this he rose and confronted her. His face was white and set, and his eyes sad.

"Greta," he said hoarsely, "even before uncle and aunt died and left you to the sole care of my mother and myself, you had learnt to trust me in all things. Will you not heed me now?"

She gazed at him wonderingly.

"You look and talk so strangely, Arnold, you frighten me. Instead of congratulations, you give me something that seems more like groans and hisses. Of course, I will heed you, but—but really I do not think this treatment is quite fair. If you told me that you were engaged I should——"

She did not finish her sentence, but stopped suddenly, as though its significance had struck more forcibly upon her mind than when she began, and had appalled her a little. Mervyn flushed slightly, but, controlling his feelings, said gently:

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"Now, tell me, Greta, what it is in Claude Evans that makes you love him enough to be his wife."

She twirled nervously the hat she held in her hand.

"I should think the reason was evident enough. Why all the girls rave about his Greek profile and gentlemanly bearing, and Bella Dean has determined to catch him."

"But what if, by-and-bye, when the exhilaration of having carried off the prize that Bella and the rest have desired is gone, and if then your woman's heart, your woman's intellect, demands something in your husband besides a Greek profile and a stylish air?"

Greta burst into a laugh, and then suddenly became serious.

"Of course, I know that he is everything that is noble and good, and—and all that, or I should not be willing to marry him. We like the same things—dancing, tennis, dogs and poetry. We have never had a single quarrel, and he is as attentive as a knight in the days of chivalry. What more could one possibly desire in a husband?"

"Spoiled by flattery, selfish, fickle, indolent and pleasure-loving, Claude Evans has hardly a quality calculated to make a woman happy as his wife. He can never love anyone so well as he loves himself. Five years from now you would not think for a moment of choosing him as the companion of your life. You do not love him in the least now. Greta, I must save you from the sin of ignorance. I must refuse to sanction an engagement between you and him. You shall not make a false start in life, if I can prevent it."

He spoke with a heat which he knew was not wise, but his emotion was too strong to be controlled.

She stopped twirling her hat, and stared at him as if she doubted the evidence of her own ears.

"You will not give your consent to my marriage with Claude," she gasped.

Even while regretting his declaration as premature, he could not recede from the position he had taken.

"If it will avail dear, I will beg you on my knees, to wait; to learn to know yourself better before you decide on such a momentous step," he said. "Do not force me to seem harsh and tyrannical."

"You talk as if I were a child, and I am nineteen years old," she broke out, a dangerous flash in her black eyes. "I know my own mind—it is absurd to suppose I do not. Why you are so prejudiced against poor Claude I cannot imagine. But if you persist in being so unreasonable, and refuse your consent to our engagement, I suppose we shall have to do without it."

Mervyn covered his face with his hands. Too well he knew that arguments would strengthen her obstinacy, and her blind belief that it was love she felt for the handsome fellow whom she had won away from Bella Dean. He was powerless to make her comprehend what he himself perceived so clearly.

Then he felt her breath upon his cheek, and the touch of her head upon his shoulder, as she always used to rest it when a child.

A thrill went over him with a wild regret. Perhaps if he had not been so patient in his waiting, if he had let her know his hopes, and the real quality of his love for her, she might not have turned to another.

"Dear Arnold," she whispered, in her old affectionate way, "we have never quarrelled, and nothing ought to come between us. Try to like Claude for my sake, and do not think that I shall care any less for you because I am engaged to him."

She had divined his jealousy, though not its depths. The thought came that he was, perhaps, blinded by it, as she was by the exhilaration of conquest.

She drew away from him as if hurt.

"Why do you not answer? You are not like yourself to-day, Arnold. Are you trying to be like one of those disagreeable, domineering guardians we read of sometimes?"

"I am trying to be kind—I am trying to understand my duty," he said. "For a long time I have been apprehensive of this hour, and I have seen only one course

Claude Evans had left her to steal behind a rustic seat.

open if persuasion failed. In desperate cases physicians use desperate measures, and take the responsibility.

"There is a way by which I can test the worth of this young man, and prove the sincerity of his feelings for you. But to do it, I shall have to give you pain, and destroy some of your most cherished illusions. Must I do this Greta?"

"You speak in enigmas, Arnold," she replied, slowly, and more thoughtfully than she had yet spoken. "I do not think anything could force me to give up Claude, and I am sure neither he nor I need be afraid of tests."

"Let me say to him that you are willing to wait a

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year before entering into a formal engagement, because it is my wish," he pleaded.

"I would yield to any resonable wish of yours, but this one is too exacting. It is not fair to him. I defy you to prove him unworthy."

Mervyn's air of irresolution gave place to one of settled determination.

Crossing to the back of the room, he opened the door of a smaller apartment beyond.

"Step in here, and listen to the interview between Claude Evans and myself. But I warn you that it will try your fortitude."

She hesitated, then, without a word, but with a proud uplifting of her head, passed him and entered the room.

"If, indeed, I am mistaken in him, Greta," Mervyn said, with agitation, "I will—I pledge my word—I will give you up to him, trusting that a real love will spring from what is now a girlish infatuation. Do not be startled by the disclosure I shall make. It seems necessary you should know the truth, and although it may give you a shock, it can change nothing, dear. Remember, I am talking to him for a purpose, and, consequently, shall put the matter in its worst light."

"You have made me very curious, but you have not frightened me. This is rather theatrical, though, isn't it? But be sure the curtain will come down on Claude and me embracing each other, and my stern guardian blessing us," said Greta, but looking rather flustered, nevertheless.

"If I am using means that I had better have left unemployed, try to forgive me, Greta, though I shall never forgive myself," he rejoined; and he partially closed the door upon her, leaving an aperture through which she could hear distinctly all that passed.

It was several minutes, however, before he felt equal to ringing for a servant, and sending a message to the young man, who all this time had been waiting in the drawing-room.

At length he did so, and when Claude Evans obeyed the summons, he found Mervyn seated at his desk, and was slightly offended at not being received more effusively.

As he motioned him to a seat, and apologised for keeping him waiting so long, Mervyn scrutinised him sharply.

The Greek profile was apparent enough, but the effect was somewhat marred by his hair being parted in the middle. His clothes were faultless, and his hands white as a girl's. His eyes were of a violet blue, and had a sort of brooding self-satisfaction in their expression.

"I suppose Greta has taken all this time to tell you that she has made me the happiest of men," he said pulling at his incipient moustache and smiling. "I suppose it is the proper thing to ask your consent, as her cousin and guardian. Or, ought I to speak to her aunt, your mother?"

"You are correct in coming to me," returned Mervyn. "Under the circumstances, I am compelled to make certain very practical inquiries. Your social position is, of course, all that could be desired. But I do not know what means you have of supporting a wife."

Claude left off stroking his moustache and looked aghast.

"Why, I—really, Mr. Mervyn, isn't that rather straining a point? My father is a man of wealth, and Greta is an heiress in her own right. Surely nothing could be more propitious."

"You are the eldest of five children, if I am not mistaken. Your father's wealth would hardly be wealth when divided amongst so many, and you have been educated to follow no profession. If Greta were a poor girl, should you feel that it would be expedient to make her your wife?"

Claude moved uneasily in his chair.

"My answer to a question based on an improbability can only be that I love her," said Claude, grandly.

Mervyn heard a rustling sound in the little room beyond, and fearing that Greta might take it into her head to rush in with an "I told you so," hastened to say:

"I need not hesitate, then, Mr. Evans, to tell you the truth. At present it is known only to myself."

The rustling ceased, and for a moment there was a dead silence.

Then Claude asked, uneasily:

"What do you mean?"

"To explain, it will be necessary to recall some details connected with the Mervyn family. You are doubtless aware that Mr. and Mrs. Dent Mervyn resided in Italy for many years."

"You are speaking of Greta's parents," said Claude, blankly.

"When they returned they brought Greta with them. She was then a child of six, who was born while they were in Italy," Mervyn continued, without making any more direct answer. "Within a few years Uncle Dent lost his wife, whose health suffered in our uncertain climate; and when Greta was twelve years old, he, too, died. As he left no will, she, as his only child, inherited his wealth. She was given into my mother's charge, and although I was only about your present age, I was appointed her guardian at her request and my mother's."

Claude bowed assentingly. These were facts with which everyone was acquainted, and there seemed no reason why they should be dragged into the present conversation.

"Everything concerning Greta and her inheritance appeared perfectly simple until about eight months ago. Then in going through my uncle's old desk, searching for certain papers connected with the estate, I accidently touched the spring of a drawer which I never knew existed. In this drawer I found papers which materially changed Greta's position and explained something my uncle tried to tell me on his death bed, but—that I was unable to understand."

"A will containing some eccentric condition!" ejaculated Claude, much disturbed.

Mervyn paused before answering.

He remembered that he had another listener, and that it was she and not the young man before him, who must be considered.

"Unfortunately there is no will," he said presently. "I say unfortunately, for, as things are, a will was essential to make the property legally hers. If you will glance over these papers, Mr. Evans, you will at once comprehend the meaning."

Claude received the papers mechanically which Mervyn took from the desk and handed to him.

He was so astounded that for a time he lost consciousness of being a handsome, faultlessly dressed young man for whom the world was made; and the effect of his swift, eager scrutiny of the documents was a sort of stupefaction.

"Is it really true?" he questioned feebly. "Greta an adopted daughter—not a Mervyn at all."

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Mervyn's strained and anxious ears caught no sound from the inner room, and nothing in his calm tone betrayed the tension he was under, as he replied:

"The same to us all in love, as though she had really

"You are a villain, and I hate you," she cried.

been a Mervyn by birth. But, as you see, her father was a German musician, her mother an Italian, and she was never legally adopted. Her real parents died of the Roman fever when she was an infant, and my uncle and aunt having no childr n, took her, and no one suspected she was not their own; as indeed, she was by every tie of affection."

"Then, I suppose, it is you who are the real heir to the property?" gasped Claude.

"Exactly," returned Mervyn, tersely.

A silence followed.

Claude was entirely overcome by the revelation.

Mervyn watched him attentively, and waited.

"Does Greta know?" the former asked, finally.

"You are the first one to whom I have confided the truth. You can comprehend that the discovery placed me in an unpleasant position, and one in which it was difficult for me to see my best course of action. You will appreciate my motives in not disturbing our dear Greta's tranquility until it became necessary. To one who aspired to become her husband, I was in honour bound to state the exact position of affairs."

"Precisely so," said Claude.

He passed back the papers, his handsome face clouded. Then brightening as a thought struck him he remarked.

"After all, it need not be made public. As Greta is your ward, and you are so fond of her, I suppose in the end it will be all the same as far as she is concerned."

"You mean that she will be my heiress," queried Mervyn. "You forget," he added drily. "I am not an old man. I am barely thirty. I may marry."

At this Claude looked indignant.

"Surely you will make some provision for Greta," he urged.

"Be that as it may," rejoined Mervyn, decisively, "whoever marries her must take her, not as Greta Mervyn, the heiress, but as Greta Retzsch, an orphan without a penny she can call her own."

Claude gave him a searching look, moved uneasily in his chair, and coughed.

"You see now the importance of the question you thought so unnecessary as to your means of supporting a wife," said Mervyn, quietly.

"Certainly—quite proper, of course," stammered Claude. "But—under the new aspect of the case, I fear—I really do not see how I can answer it in a satisfactory manner."

Mervyn drew a deep, long breath.

The young man was beginning to hedge, and Greta would be saved from a life-long mistake. It would be time enough to count the cost later.

"It will be best for you to be quite frank as to your intentions," he said. "Do you still desire to make my ward your wife?"

"Of course, nothing can alter my love and admiration for Greta. This hits me very hard, Mr. Mervyn. But, as you intimated, I should not at present be able to support a wife as—as I should wish. Besides, my parents would never consent to my marrying a girl without a—a pedigree, when there are so many good families to select from. You appreciate the extreme delicacy of my position, Mr. Mervyn."

Perhaps, there were those of the young fellow's most ardent girl worshippers who would hardly have admired his appearance now, so devoid of all manliness Mervyn thought.

He rose and regarded him with an air of decision.

"I have, then, to say to Greta that there are insurmountable objections to an engagement of marriage between you and her."

Claude also rose, but did not meet the other's eye, or respond immediately.

"It is hard to lose her—it will break her heart to have to give me up," he burst out at last.

Mervyn frowned.

"Greta is too young and inexperienced to distinguish between a pleasant sense of companionship, and a deeper feeling," he said frigidly.

"I do not think you need apprehend that she will break her heart. In any event, as I told her, I should withhold my consent to a formal betrothal, at present."

At this Claude looked rather piqued and relieved. The latter emotion only, however, found expression in his response.

"Of course, if you thought our engagement

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inexpedient, the matter is easily arranged, and it only remains for me to withdraw my suit, although I hope you will say to Greta that I do so with great sorrow."

"She shall know your exact words," returned Mervyn, with a truth that the owner was far from comprehending.

Then, with a few confused regrets, Claude hastened to take a departure which even he could not feel to be dignified.

But that he had a realisation of being well out of an awkward predicament was apparent enough as he walked away.

He had gone, and Mervyn was master of the situation. But there are some victories which cost more than a defeat, and this might prove one of them.

While he stood irresolute, uncertain, the strength which had thus sustained him thus far in his purpose leaving him, the door towards which he was afraid to go was flung open, and Greta appeared on the threshold.

"Greta," he cried wistfully.

Without heeding him she rushed across the room to the desk, seizing upon the papers which had been given her suitor to read.

There was a hard look on her features, and the rich colour in her cheeks seemed to burn there like flame.

"Ah," she exclaimed, as her eyes ran eagerly over the letters signed by the man she had always thought her father, which were addressed to someone by the name of Retzsch. It is true then, it was not a story made up for the occasion."

She crumpled the papers in her hands, and turned upon him with a look of anger such as he had never seen in her face before.

The hot blood of her Italian mother was stirred, and boiled in her veins.

"You are a villain, and I hate you," she cried fiercely. He recoiled, growing pale as death, and could not speak.

"You did not think when you were robbing me of my illusions about Claude, that you were also destroying those I had about yourself," she went on in the same vehement way. "You succeeded in making him despicable enough—in blighting my happy dream of love. But you took from me at the same time my Cousin Arnold, whom I have trusted all my life, who was dearer to me than anyone in the world—yes, not even excepting Claude—and you put in his place an underhanded scheming creature, who had not the bravery to take openly what he coveted, but seized upon the first pretence that offered to get it in a hypocritical way."

As these accusations fell on his ear, Mervyn felt like one stunned by a blow from an unknown enemy.

"Greta," he said, his voice trembling, "I was prepared for grief—for censure, even, but not for this. It is true I had to shatter your girlish dream, but would it have been better to have continued to dream, until the awakening came too late?"

"I would not marry Claude Evans if he were to beg me on his knees," she flashed out. "I despise him."

"Then need you condemn me so harshly? If it was bitter to learn the facts of your birth in such a manner,

"Did you wish to see me, Greta?" he questioned.

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and at such a moment when you could least bear it, remember there seemed no other way to save you from a mistaken impulse. Of course, dear, you understand that—whatever I said to him—there can be no real difference in your position."

"No difference?" she echoed. "Do you not suppose I comprehend your intentions. Could I not see that you wanted me to think you only claimed the property supposed to be mine, because you were obliged to do so, to prove his unworthiness. Have you not waited all this time for a chance? You mean to say now, of course, that you will not take it from me, knowing all the time that nothing could induce me to touch a farthing of it."

As he listened, the realisation of her meaning penetrated his mind at last, and he saw in what a warped and distorted aspect she regarded the measures he had taken.

A spasm of pain went over him, and seemed to reach his very soul.

He wheeled round abruptly, and going to the window, stood staring out, but seeing nothing.

Greta watched him with a wrathful, rebellious look, into which, however, there crept an expression of bitter anguish.

There was a long interval of silence. When at last he turned towards her again, he was able to speak without anger or unfairness.

"I will not reproach you, Greta," he said. "I can understand that in the first pain of losing your faith in one you thought true you rush to the extreme of suspecting everyone else of being false. Some time you will see more clearly. As for the property, my only desire since my discovery has been to make it legally yours, as it is yours by right. I admit being a little underhand, as you call it, in intimating the reverse to Mr. Evans. But I had to save you from yourself, Greta."

"Oh! But if you are crafty in one direction, you can be in another. I shall never touch the property. You know that. I shall take the name which belongs to me, and go away and earn my livelihood."

"You are speaking from an impulse—you cannot mean to grieve me so much. If I have committed an error of judgment, if I have fallen in your estimation, I am still the Arnold who used to share your joys and sorrows, and to whom you will ever be dear."

She was moved so much by his appeal, that the fiery light in her eyes was dimmed by a sudden rush of tears. But through them she looked at him with an obstinacy that he began to fear could not be overcome.

"If I could forget what you have been to me, this hour would not be so hard," she said. "But now, I would not accept a favour from your hands—I could not. I am not speaking from impulse when I say that I shall always regard this money as yours, and shall act accordingly. You will want it, when you marry, you know."

She was turning to leave the room, when Mervyn, maddened by the possibilities her words held, lost his self-control at last, and, barring her way, cried out, passionately:

"You shall not go, Greta, until you know what going like this means to me—until you know just what you are to me. Even if it puts me still more in the wrong, I must tell you at last that I love you—love you not as a cousin, as a guardian, but as a man loves a woman who alone can make his life complete. Love you, oh, my dearest, with a love which has grown with the years; with a love which would make any sacrifice possible that secured your happiness. Because I love you like this, Greta, because of the hopes I dared to cherish, and which to-day has done so much to destroy, because of the pain I must inevitably suffer, do not wound me unnecessary, I entreat."

Both anger and tears vanished from Greta's eyes as she became conscious of his meaning, and an indefinable expression, part wonder, part confusion, part a betrayal of the strange incomprehensible emotion that thrilled her whole being, took their place.

She stole one swift look at him and knew she could never forget the face that she saw transformed by his long suppressed love.

It was a face, with its strength, its intelligence, its passion, better, better worth gazing at than the handsome one of Claude Evans; and the truth shining in those clear grey eyes shamed her previous unjust suspicions.

But, somehow, she not could ask his pardon, could not respond by any word that might mitigate his suffering. All she did was to clasp her hands together, shrink back and avert her head, then rush from the room, exclaiming as she went, frantically:

"No! no! Do not say more! Do not!"

They did not meet again until the next day at dinner, and then in the presence of his mother.

Mervyn, although the storm of emotion he had experienced had left its traces on his countenance, had regained his self-possession; but Greta was nervous and embarrassed, and did not once glance in his direction.

There was no longer any look of hatred or violence in the dark, beautiful face, but instead a pensiveness such as he had never seen there before.

Was it wholly because of Claude's faithlessness, and her lost illusion, that she grieved; or was there a tinge of regret for the pain she had inflicted on himself? Did she distrust him still? He could not tell. He was sure only of the fact of her avoidance, which did not lessen as the days went on.

He had not the courage to attempt to break through the constraint which now marked all their necessary intercourse, and tell her of the steps he was anxious to take to make his uncle's property legally hers; he trembled still lest she should persist in her resolution to refuse it.

There was no reason why she should not still be Greta Mervyn to the world, as Claude was not likely to betray a secret which would involve placing his own conduct in an aspect that admitted of criticism. Only her own will, consequently, could alter anything. But it was of this perverse, undisciplined will that he was afraid.

Not from Greta, however, but from his mother, did he learn at last precisely what determination the young girl's reserve covered.

Mrs. Mervyn, who loved Greta next to her son, had suspected nothing unusual; for by a mutual, tacit consent, both Arnold and Greta had made an effort to seem as usual when in her presence.

But one morning she broke into the library, where he was in vain trying to work, and sank into a chair entirely overcome.

It was some moments before she could explain the cause of her emotion.

"Oh, Arnold!" she finally ejaculated, "why did you let Greta know of that dreadful discovery? You ought to have known the mischief it would do. She has just been telling me about it, and has sent me to break the news to you that she has made arrangements to leave us next week."

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The pen dropped from his fingers, making a disfiguring ink-splash on the neat page of manuscript before him.

"Where is she going?" he questioned, in a voice which his mother would not have recognised as his if he had not been before her.

"She intends to take a situation. Through an old schoolfellow of hers, Miss Rayburn, she has heard of a governess who is ill, and wants a substitute for a few months. Greta says it will give her a start to take the position, and that she is determined no longer to usurp a place that is not hers. My son, what is to be done. I cannot move her in the least."

He did not answer, but sat motionless, with white set lips and bowed head.

"I have no doubt your reasons for revealing this unfortunate secret of her birth to Greta were perfectly justifiable," Mrs. Mervyn went on, distressfully. "Yet it might have been better to have waited until she was older. I—I wish you had consulted me first. But you have so much influence over her, even in her most obstinate moods, surely you can dissuade her from this needless and foolish step."

Arnold rose abruptly.

"I can do nothing, mother," he said, like one who was weary and heart-sick.

With those words he left the room, and a moment after she saw him hurrying across the lawn.

In that long, tumultuous, miserable walk which Mervyn took, he formed a resolution which enabled him to accept Greta's decision for the time being.

To the young girl's astonishment he offered no opposition to her plan and made no attempt to overcome her avoidance.

He told his mother, briefly, that the arrangement was probably for the best at present, and to trust to him to find a way to induce her to come back.

Mrs. Mervyn was obliged, therefore, to yield, and prepared to accompany Greta, and leave her with her friend.

Greta herself showed no signs of altering her determination. But she was very quiet and thoughtful, wholly unlike the laughing, careless, impetuous girl she had been.

Mervyn wondered sometimes if she had really cared more for Claude than he had believed, and after the first anger of his desertion had passed, had begun to pine for him, and to find the rumours of his renewed attentions to Bella Dean unbearable.

In view of the change in her towards him, he was prepared for a very formal leave-taking. She, who had been his darling all these years, would go away without a word to soften the cruelty of her repudiation.

He sat on the terrace in the twilight, heedless of the chilly spring wind, oppressed by the thought of to-morrow, when she would be gone, taking the sunshine of his life for ever. Then into the midst of these reflections came the intuition of another presence near. Expecting to see his mother, he looked round. But it was Greta who stood there, her slim pretty figure outlined against the shadows, her head drooping, her hands clasped together.

"Did you—did you wish to see me, Greta?" he questioned, doubting and hoping, as he sprang to his feet.

"I—I could not go away without telling you how wrong I was to distrust your motives as I did," she faltered. "I cannot take the money. I feel I am right in that; but I am ashamed and sorry that I accused you of any intentions that were not generous and good."

Her words lifted a weight from him, and yet left him sad. For the barrier of his acknowledged and unreturned love, of her implacable determination, was not removed by them.

"I have already forgiven you, Greta," he said, gently.

"And will prove it by keeping the money?" she asked eagerly.

"I hope you will not force me to keep what I never wanted, and what is yours by right," he answered.

She grew pale and red, and pressed her hands together nervously.

She waited impatiently while it was being read.

"I could never feel that it was mine now—never," she said.

He looked at her silently a moment, then taking a step nearer, he responded:

"We will not quarrel about it now, Greta. Some day I hope you will see everything differently. Let us part as friends should. I have not asked you to stay, because I feel it might be better for you to get away for a time from the scene of a painful disillusion. But, before you go, I want you to make me a promise."

"A promise?" she faltered, gazing round as if she would like to run away from him.

"Do not be alarmed. It is nothing that need trouble you in the least. It is only that if I resolve to go away for a time, to pursue certain anthropological researches, you will come when your engagement is ended, and stay with my mother. She will not miss

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me so much if you are here, and it will be a favour to us both."

Greta's manner changed as she listened. She seemed

As he held out his arms wistfully she ran into them.

suddenly like one stunned. He waited in vain for a response.

"Will you not give me this promise—for my mother's sake, if not for mine?" he questioned, at length, again.

"I promise to come if—if you should go away," she said in a low agitated tone. Then abruptly, she added, "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, dear," he answered, sadly, and stooped and touched her forehead with his lips.

This was their parting, and he at least knew that it was very uncertain when and how they would meet again.

For the resolve he had made on becoming convinced of the implacability of her determination to leave her home, was that, since one of them must be an exile, it should be himself, and not Greta.

He was convinced that the sight of him was now too painful and embarrassing to her, and that the love which might have brought them nearer together had, instead, put them irrevocably asunder.

He had felt quite sure that she could be induced to come to his mother, ostensibly for a short time, and that so long as he remained absent she would prolong her stay.

On his own part, he had a consciousness that it was better for him to be among new scenes. He had been living here in a fool's paradise, his fatuous hopes mocked from their ashes.

It seemed to him now that he had been very presumptuous to have imagined the young girl's cousinly fondness would ever be transformed into love.

Far far away from all that was familiar, and all that was associated with her, he would be better able to learn resignation; consequently three months afterwards, he left England, en route for South Africa, where he proposed to make a study of the people. He had timed his departure just before the termination of Greta's temporary engagement, and, in another week, she was again an inmate of her old home.

Mrs. Mervyn had heard from her often, and knew that she had sometimes been homesick and depressed. But she was not prepared for the continuance of the girl's low spirits now that she had come back. It must be she was fretting for Claude, the elder lady decided.

She had heard the story of her son's heroic measures, before he went away, from his own lips, with the reservation of the confession of love into which he had been betrayed, and she had shaken her head over it dubiously.

Claude's betrothal to Bella Dean had been announced before Greta's return, and Mrs. Mervyn had taken pains to prepare her for the news by letter. Greta had made no comment, and when Bella called upon her, received her with an air of triumph with apparent equanimity.

Even on meeting Claude himself, for the first time since their parting as engaged lovers, she was much less embarrassed than he was. Nevertheless, Mrs. Mervyn felt assured that there was in the girl's heart a secret yearning for something gone. It could not be on account of the fact of her birth—she talked freely and frankly about that, with no undue regret. It must be then, she had really loved Claude, or, at least that the shattering of her first romance had left a void nothing could fill.

She did not venture to talk much of her son, therefore, except when his letters came, and then Greta would listen attentively enough to such extracts from them as his mother read aloud. There was never a word about Greta herself in them, though Mrs. Mervyn wrote him always her own doubts and fears concerning her. Neither did Greta ever send him any message, or make any comment on what was in his letters.

But on the day that Claud and Bella were married, after returning from the wedding, Greta broke out suddenly with the unexpected question:

"When is he coming back?"

Mrs. Mervyn put on her spectacles to look at her. There was a far-away expression in her eyes, and there were tired lines about her mouth. Evidently this

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wedding had been too much for her strength, and she was trying to forget it by talking of Arnold.

"You know he has said nothing about coming back at present," was Mrs. Mervyn's response.

"He has been gone more than three months. I should think you would ask him his intentions," said Greta, in a tone that was not quite natural.

"Perhaps I had better," returned the other, slightly surprised at the suggestion, and Greta said no more.

But from this time she evinced a restlessness that could not be accounted for, Mrs. Mervyn thought, except by the supposition that witnessing Claude's marriage had upset her completely.

When Arnold's next letter came, there was a feverish glitter in her eyes, quite alarming, as she brought it from the postman to his mother.

She waited impatiently while it was being read, and finally interrupted the mother's fond pondering over it.

"You asked him when he was coming back, what does he say?"

Mrs. Mervyn sighed.

"He writes he is much engrossed by his studies, and is likely to remain in Africa for a long time to come."

Without a word more Greta turned and left the room.

It was several hours before Mrs. Mervyn saw her again, and then her restlessness had all disappeared, and she was strangely quiet and pale.

In the months that followed nothing more was said about Arnold's coming back.

Greta had grown very tractable now, and made no references to her determination to earn her own livelihood. But time did not bring back her old happy self.

The months went by, and a year had passed since the day that had changed the current of her pleasant life.

A year that had taken away Bella's air of elation, with much of the pretty colour in her cheeks, and had brought her to say, with tears in her eyes, to her quondam rival:

"Never—never marry, Greta! If girls only knew how selfish men are!"

A year and the fruit trees were again in bloom.

As Greta stood gazing mournfully at the blossoms white in the moonlight that streamed over them, Mrs. Mervyn's agitated voice behind her broke in upon her meditations:

"I am much affected by what I have heard, Greta. Arnold's lawyer has been here, you know, and he says my son is going to buy an ostrich farm, and stay in Africa permanently, or at least for many years. How can I bear him to be away from me so long?"

But Greta returned no sympathetic answer. She had drawn a quick, gasping breath; and then, as Mrs. Mervyn paused, she said moodily:

"Ostriches are supposed to be the most stupid creatures on earth. I do not see how anyone can be interested in them."

As she spoke she went down the steps, and on across the lawn.

Hurt and perplexed, Mrs. Mervyn stared after her a moment, then went back into the house.

Had she followed the young girl, she would have found her on the garden seat, weeping as though her heart would break, and have made a better guess as to the cause of her hidden sorrow of the past year.

Greta herself had made no mistake as to what it was she had missed out of her life all this time. Since she had seen that look of passionate love on Arnold's face, even in that moment of mortification and confusion and change, she had realised dimly that something in her nature had been awakened by it, which had never responded to any look of Claude's.

It had not needed the significant words of his wife to convince her she had made a false start, which but for Arnold could not have been retrieved. Slowly the consciousness had grown, from which at first she had shrunk afraid, that he whom she had loved as a child and a girl, was he whom alone she could love as a woman.

Those lonely, homesick days had shown her how little she had known her own mind, and stamped upon her heart a longing for another look of love from Arnold's eyes, which had never left it since.

Now—now she would see him no more. It was too evident that she had driven him from his home. Perhaps he despised her—how could he help it, when she had been so obdurate, so unjust—a spoiled child?

"Oh, Arnold! Arnold!" she sobbed out, "will you never, never come back to me?"

The trees overhead rustled in the breeze, and a shower blossoms fell upon her. Then a voice said, through the still evening air:

"I am here, Greta."

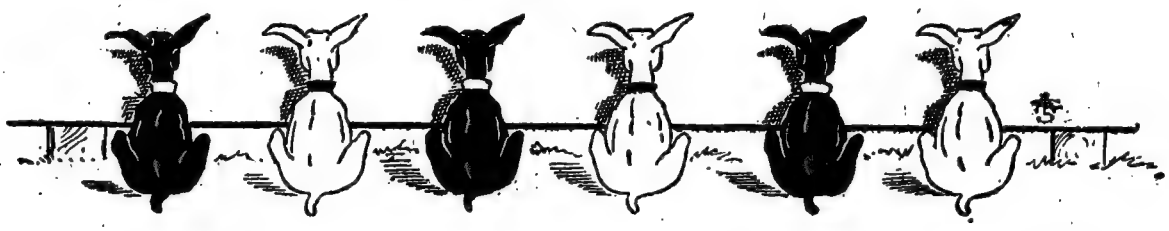
With a shriek, she started up. Surely it was a phantom of her imagination—not Arnold himself who stood there, with the love-light in his eyes that she had yearned so long to see?

"Do not be frightened, dear. I had a sudden impulse to come home that I could not resist. I have just arrived. Mother said you were here, and I came to find you. Is it true that you wanted me, Greta—is it true you said, 'Arnold come back'?"

She was pale and trembling, but as he held out his arms wistfully, hopelessly, she ran into them, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I am not worthy of your love, Arnold; but I will try to be—I will try very hard. I will do anything you wish—only—do not leave me again, for I cannot live without you."

T. JOHNSON.



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# The Tiger's Bell.

THE weather that autumn, was so fine and warm, as the forecasts say, that almost everyone stayed on at Loch Neven—that is, of course, everyone who was worth talking to or talking about. And others came, sporting people, not "sporty" people, who are an abomination in the eyes of the god Pan and his true disciples, but men, real men, clad in weather-beaten tweeds, disreputable head gear and heavy tramping boots and accompanied by dogs and guns.

These tarried not at Loch Neven, though femininity there was sweet and lovable and flirtatious, but hied away by waggon to the north; save one, MacNichol, who tarried because fate brought him face to face the next morning with someone in white, someone fresh as the morning, and because the law of natural selection bade him tarry.

So the good MacNichol forgot the promises he had made to his friends in town of no end of braces of partridge and mallard; forgot his sworn determination to take a pair of antlers home, and let the other comrades in arms go north; and the ducks continued to fly in across the red of the western sky, and the gun of the native pot-hunter echoed from afar, but he neither saw nor heard.

And everything would perhaps have gone well and ended happily and uneventfully, had not interference in the shape of one Bronson came by a subsequent boat and made himself obnoxious in the eye of MacNichol. He was a plausible, well-dressed fellow, immaculate from morning until midnight, and he neither swam nor fished nor shot nor played tennis, but straightway monopolised Miss Muriel Manning's society to the exclusion particularly of the tardy MacNichol.

It was maddening to Mac to hear Bronson talk; and his appetite fell away, and he became moody and taciturn, until at length even the preoccupied noticed his complaint.

"They've got the queerest yarn up the river," said Jimmie Brown one evening, as all the guests sat at ease upon the broad verandah of the hotel. "When I was up there this afternoon a farmer told me there was a strange wild animal in the woods, a big yellow thing that wasn't like any other animal that he had ever seen except in the pictures and circuses."

"What do you think it was?" said Bronson.

"Well, he said it might seem like foolishness to say so, but he believed it was a tiger."

Some of the ladies screamed. Bronson said:

"He must have thought you easy, Brown. Next time it will be elephants, or rhinoceri from Lake Nyanza."

"I tell you, he was in dead earnest," said Brown. "He wasn't the only one, either, he said, who had seen it. One of his neighbours, he said, had lost a sheep that they couldn't find a trace of, not even a lock of wool; and another neighbour, he said, had been driving back one day, and his team had all of a sudden become possessed with fear, and wouldn't go any farther. I tell you, there's something strange about it."

"Very," said Bronson sententiously.

"Oh, a man who knows as much as you do about live stock might easily think he saw live elephants and rhinosceroses!" retorted Brown. "If you weren't so slow that you couldn't walk more'n a hundred yards past the tennis court, you'd see buffalo in the meadow and hippopotami switching their tails over the rocks."

"Hippopotami," echoed Bronson, musingly.

"What do you think about it, Mr. MacNichol?" She said, breaking the tension.

MacNichol felt for his tobacco pouch. It was dusk, and MacNichol was dark skinned, so that they did not see him flush. But he always flushed, at least inwardly, when She spoke to him. Remembering this, he did not light his pipe just then, for one flame might have betrayed another, and because Bronson was looking at him from beneath his heavy lids.

"I think it possible," MacNichol said.

"Won't you say why?" she said.

"Never mind the why and wherefore," hummed the sceptical Bronson. "It's sufficient that MacNichol thinks it possible."

"And why impossible, O Self Sufficiency?" said MacNichol.

"What! elephants and rhinoceri and hippopotami?" said the evasive Bronson.

"Yes, elephants and rhinoceri, if you like," said Brown.

"Is this a kindergarten?" said Bronson.

"We will suppose that it is your class, and I will give

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you an object lesson," said MacNichol, "to demonstrate my belief in the possibility of a tiger having been seen by Brown's farmer.

"Not long ago," he continued, after he had lighted his briar, "a circus showed at Smithville, forty miles from here. During its stay there, so the papers said, a tiger escaped from its cage and its keeper and made its way into the hills to the north——"

"There you see!" cried Brown triumphantly, while the ladies exclaimed in horror, and drew in their chairs.

"At least we hear," said Bronson sneeringly.

"Of course," said MacNichol, "when Mr. Bronson sees the tiger we shall both see and hear."

"Yes, we'll hear Bronson all right," said Brown; and that was one on Bronson, for he did not like to hear her laugh at him.

"Of course," he said, ere the laugh had died, "Mr. MacNichol has every intention of hunting the tame tiger."

"Every intention," said MacNichol. "Would you care to accompany me?"

Brown laughed annoyingly.

"Not on a wild goose chase," said Bronson a little out of humour.

"It will be a wild tiger hunt," said MacNichol. "If there is any chasing——" he paused significantly, and Brown laughed triumphantly.

"You might carry Mac's gun, you know," he said gaily. "Only no climbing trees, Bronson, no climbing trees."

"I'll bet Mr. MacNichol twenty pounds he don't see any tiger," cried Bronson vulgarly, "and I'll bet him another twenty that if he does see one he won't shoot him."

"I'll compromise," said MacNichol, "and bet you fifty that if I see the tiger I shall kill him."

"That's all right," said Bronson, "only——"

"Only," said the mind-reading MacNichol, "you would have to take my word that I hadn't seen the tiger. Quite right. We will hunt him together, you and I and Brown. Brown can be stake-holder."

"That's all right!" said Bronson again. "But if you think I've nothing to do except tramp through a bush all day on the jolly of a hayseed, you're away off! Tell you what I'll do; if you shoot the tiger, I'll give ——"

"If Mr. MacNichol shoots the tiger," She put in adroitly, "you will give twenty pounds towards the bell for the new church."

"Good idea!" said Bronson. "I'll make it the whole bell!"

And so it was agreed.

And now, from morn till eve, from dawn till dusk even by moonlight, Brown and MacNichol did the hills and hollows, the marshes and meadows of the country roundabout, intent upon the slaughter of that mythical tiger, until at length even Jimmy Brown grew tired if not sceptical, and returned to tennis and the dance and flirtation.

At the end of three days, MacNichol had to submit to much chaff, in which even she joined, and it would have provoked a less determined man into packing up and getting out. But MacNichol, smiling grimly, held his peace.

More stories floated in from farmers of the strange "something" that had frightened horses and incidentally the farmers themselves. The farmers had gone out, armed to the teeth with family heirlooms more dangerous to the family than the quarry; but nothing came of that.

And MacNichol did not say that the story he had told of a tiger escaping from a circus menagerie at Smithville was pure fiction, invented at the time to silence the aggressive Bronson; yet he clung to his strange faith that something—if not a tiger, then something alien, something strange, perhaps even uncanny—was haunting the wilds about Loch Neven, and his adventurous spirit would not be quenched.

And it was upon the fourth day that his perseverance was in some measure rewarded! For suddenly coming upon the sandy shore of the river, miles above Loch Neven, in a desolate place, he came upon the footprints of the tiger!

At least, he concluded they were a tiger's. They were large, feline, terrible. He had never before seen the print of a tiger's paw, and these if not a tiger's were those of a very large cat of some sort.

Perhaps, after all, he said to himself, a monstrous wild cat was in the locality; and remembering the proclivities of wild cats, he turned half-fearfully and looked into the trees roundabout.

Failing to find the returning trail, as the ground above the sand was barren and rocky, he came again to the place, and waited. But the strange creature came not; and Mac, though believing firmly in its existence and proximity, came to doubt his luck, and reviled the freak of humour that had led him into the undertaking.

Meantime, the weather remained marvellously mild and fair, and the moon grew round and smiling above the gaiety of Loch Neven.

MacNichol had come in one night, tired and ill-humoured, from a four mile row up the river, where he had lain for an hour or so hoping against hope that Fate would bring the cat his way. It was eleven o'clock, and the mellow moonlight flooded all the water and the long, crescent-shaped beach, turning river and shore to gold.

Mac could see as he walked up, rifle in hand, to the hotel, that Muriel and Bronson were sitting on the beach a little way below the bathing houses almost within the shadow of the deep pine grove. He could hear their voices, and her laughter, which doubtless was at his his expense.

Poor Mac! He began to pity himself, and then decided that a fool deserved no pity.

When he got to his room, which overlooked the beach, he lit his pipe and sat at his window, and by the clear light of the moon re-read a newspaper paragraph that had come by chance into his hand one day.

The paper slipped to the floor, and MacNichol sat at his window, smoking and thinking. He was not thinking of his tiger now, but of the "lady" down there with Bronson, on the beach. Mac could see or thought he could see, with his emerald eye, the gleam of Bronson's diamond upon her hand, even as he could see the ruby-like glow of Bronson's cigar.

He wished he had never come to Loch Neven! If he had never come to Loch Neven, he would never, perhaps, have seen her, he would never have come across this confounded paragraph with its cock-and-bull story about—

A moving something—a shadow—grew out of the blackness of the shadow of the grove; a stealthy, silent, seemingly impalpable something that moved along the sand. But no one saw—no one, save MacNichol, sitting breathless and wide-eyed at his window.

How still it was for a moment! Then came the music of the pine tops moved into murmuring by a vagrant

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breeze; and after that, the music of her voice, low and sweet; and then again silence, to MacNichol, save for the thumping of his heart as he snatched his rifle from the corner, sprang nimbly in shoeless feet through his window to the balcony, ran along that to its end, climbed over it and dropped noiselessly to the sand twelve feet below. And then as he turned, there in the shadow of the hotel, he saw, not the shadow of the tiger, but the tiger itself!

And at that moment, even as he ran into the moonlight, fell upon one knee and levelled his rifle, the full left side of the tiger toward him, his involuntary vision caught an impression of Bronson springing to his feet and running like a terror-stricken thing down the beach. And as he ran, Bronson screamed like a maniac.

Then She turned her head, wondering, and saw fastened upon her the horrid gleam in the moonlight of those awful yellow eyes; and petrified by horror, she sat like white stone, fascinated, mesmerized, unable to stir a finger, not even the finger upon which Bronson's diamond lay cynically gleaming. Then she closed her eyes, for the tiger was about to spring.

And even as he made to spring, MacNichol's rifle spoke out, even as the rifle spoke MacNichol sprang up and ran madly towards her, ready to give his life, and even as he ran, the beast flung itself into the air, and fell dully and lifeless across the yellow sand.

The tiger was dead. And so it is no wonder MacNichol held her white and lovely, and trembling now, in his arms, though there was much screaming in many keys from the hotel, and heads at windows and voices calling, and eyes upon them, and even Bronson, panting and white, coming back cautiously along the beach.

"You have your wish," she managed to say, gazing at the prone bulk of the gaunt beast lying there in the glamour of the moonlight, black and yellow like an outcast spirit of the night. And she drew back, leaning against him.

"My wish," murmured MacNichol. "Yes, I have my wish in part."

And perhaps the pressure his arm gave was involuntary.

"I mean you have killed the tiger," she said gently withdrawing from his arm.

"I was not thinking of the tiger," said MacNichol.

"No," she said, looking down.

"I had another wish, I have wished for you, because I have loved you from the moment I first saw you."

"You have saved my life," she said, looking steadily at him. "You may have—your other wish—if you care."

"Not because of this, altogether?" pleaded MacNichol, with a gesture towards the tiger.

"Perhaps I want you to take care of me always," she said smiling, and holding out her hands.

"By George!" said Bronson, coming up. "You were right about the tiger, after all, MacNichol; I've always heard that a tiger could be scared by an umbrella or a good yell. Didn't have an umbrella, so I thought I'd try the yell, and I thought if the yell failed, and I ran a bit, you know, he would follow me, and——"

"He couldn't run fast enough," she said. "But fortunately, there was one man near."

"Oh, look here!" said Bronson. "Every fellow don't go walking round with a rifle, you know, Muriel."

"Not 'Muriel' now, Mr. Bronson."

"Oh, I say!" said Bronson, staring.

"You will, I am sure, not forget the bell which you now owe to the new church."

And then she turned and walked away on MacNichol's arm, leaving Bronson motionless and staring, and a dozen people in negligé gathering in.

Bronson went away by the early boat next morning; but he was as good as his word, and sent an express order to the vicar for a goodly sum with which to buy the bell.

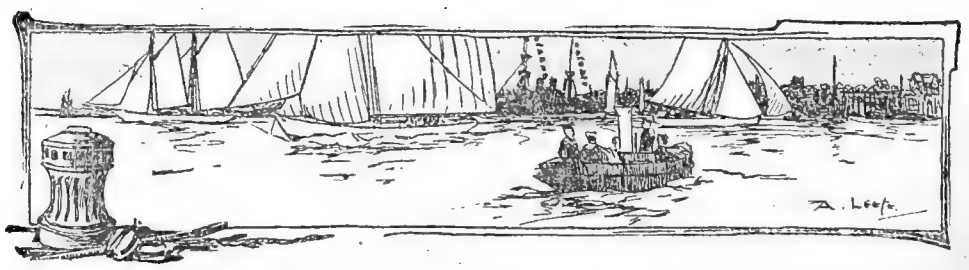
In due time the church was completed, and the bell arrived and was put in place, and in clear and resonant tones called the people to worship. When I attended service there this Autumn, I met MacNichol and his wife. Mac, brown and radiant, and his wife even lovelier within the past twelve months.

They were spending their first married weeks at Loch Neven, under a moon as wonderful and warm as that of a year ago.

The tiger? The tiger was the expensive importation of a wealthy individual, who owned a vast natural park which he purposed turning into a sort of cosmopolitan menagerie and game preserve, by turning into it wild animals of all sorts from all parts of the world.

The tiger had got away and was making tracks south, and it was the knowledge of that, communicated through the medium of a newspaper item, which had kept MacNichol on the hunt, solely of course, for the philanthropic purpose of winning for the chapel a tiger's bell. Of course.

Roger Gordon.



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# Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

## XIX.—HIS NIGHT ADVENTURE AT HIS COUNTRY HOUSE.

In the last sketch it was related how Mr. Bowser had hired a farmhouse for the benefit of his health and rushed Mrs. Bowser and the cook out there at an hour's notice. The house was found in such a state of dilapidation that when night came the cook was weeping, Mrs. Bowser was homesick and Mr. Bowser was doing his best to make out that things would be all right next day.

Amid the songs of larks and blackbirds and the hoots of owls they went to bed. Mr. Bowser had just fallen asleep and was dreaming that he was a farmer eleven feet high, cutting grass seven feet tall with a scythe fourteen feet long, when Mrs. Bowser awoke him to say:

"Get up this minute! I can hear someone prowling about outside the house!"

"My dear woman," he answered as he slowly got out of bed, "I am getting tired of this nonsense. If you are going to keep it up I'll send you home the first thing in the morning. I came out here for rest and quiet, but you——"

"Don't you hear footsteps?" she interrupted.

"It's probably a rabbit hopping about, and I'll open the door and scare the legs off him."

He went downstairs and unlocked the door and threw it open, and was just on the point of uttering a "Shoo!" when a man appeared before him and said:

"Hello, old pal, but what you doin' in my nest?"

"Who—who are you?" demanded Mr. Bowser in considerable confusion.

"Dusty Jim, of course, and you'd better clear out at once."

"Look here, you old tramp, but what are you doing about this house?" shouted Mr. Bowser as he recovered from his surprise and began to get cross.

"And what are you doin'?" shouted Dusty Jim in reply. "I've bin sleepin' in this crib for the last three months, and I don't propose to let no man turn me out. Come out, or I'll make you tired!"

Mrs. Bowser and the cook were now calling to know what was the matter, and as Mr. Bowser fell back from the door to answer them the tramp slipped inside. He was a big man and a bad man, but he had made a mistake.

Mr. Bowser turned and tackled him at once, and in five minutes he was a beaten man and being dragged off the doorstep by the heels. Mrs. Bowser was crying, and the cook was on her knees, praying as Mr. Bowser shut the door and demanded:

"Now, then, what have you broken loose about? You two women seem determined to act like idiots. I hired this place for the benefit of my health, but no sooner do we get out here than you try to upset things. I tell you I want it to stop!"

"You—you call this a holiday?" sobbed Mrs. Bowser as Dusty Jim was heard moving off for the road.

"Of course it is. I never saw such an inconsistent woman. We are out in the country. We are getting the benefit of the fresh air and the songs of the night birds, and yet because a few things are not to your liking you make a fuss. You may cry and sob and howl and kick, but we shall stay here just the same. Now you two go to bed again, and I'll sit up the rest of the night and keep things straight."

As the night was warm, Mr. Bowser opened the door and sat down on the steps. The house had hardly become quiet when Dusty Jim reappeared. He had come in peace to make inquiries. He was willing to acknowledge that he was a beaten man, but he wanted to ask:

"What you doin' in my nest?"

"How did you do it, old pal? You're a fat man and a baldheaded man, and I thought I could do you in two minits. If you'll show me that little trick you used, I'll give you half-a-sov."

"If you don't shift yourself," replied Mr. Bowser as he rose up—"if you don't get a mile away before I count a hundred, I'll mop the whole farm with your body."

"And you won't show me the trick?"

"Never!"

"All right, old boy. The conquered flies before the conqueror. If I had that trick I'd lick every tramp between here and London, but I ain't goin' to stop and argufy the matter."

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An hour later, as Mr. Bowser leant against the doorpost and dozed, something cold touched his hand, and he sprang up to find a stray dog sitting in front of him. It was a dog in search of a kind-hearted master and all the comforts of home, but he had made a mistake in the number of the house.

Mr. Bowser uttered a yell which woke up both women and then went for the dog. In his hasty movements he tripped over his own feet and took a roll among the weeds round the house, and he had just reached his feet again when Mrs. Bowser appeared at the door to ask:

He tripped over his own feet.

"Is it murder or robbery, or what?"

"And if it ain't, then what is it?" added the cook from behind.

"Oh, you are dancing about again," he replied as he came forward. "It beats all creation how you women act. Why in thunder can't you go to bed and stay there like sensible people?"

"But when you screamed out I thought——"

"I never screamed out. I was yelling at the dog. I have tried to be a patient man since we arrived here yesterday, but I warn you that the limit has been reached."

"What a holiday!" murmured Mrs. Bowser, with tears in her eyes.

"I know I shall never see home again," sobbed the cook as she turned away.

"There you go!" shouted Mr. Bowser as he combed the weeds out of his hair. "What has happened to spoil this holiday? Nothing whatever. I have simply licked a tramp and frightened away a stray dog. Now, don't let me hear again from you till morning."

He resumed his place on the step, and the house grew quiet again. Dusty Jim and the stray dog were far away, and there could be nothing more to disturb the remainder of the night.

Mr. Bowser had dozed again for half-an-hour when the owl which had hooted in the evening and gone off to see a friend now returned to have another try at it. He alighted in a tree across the road and, drawing a long breath, uttered a "hoo-o-o-o" that would have lifted a bag of potatoes a foot high. It lifted Mr. Bowser off the doorstep, and it lifted Mrs. Bowser and the cook out of bed, and for two minutes there was wild alarm.

Day was breaking, and when the women declared they would not go to bed again Mr. Bowser did not oppose them. The thought was in his mind to start for home at sunrise and to seek out the man from whom he had hired the farm and kill him as quickly as possible, but Mrs. Bowser spoilt it all by saying:

"If you will only take me home to-day I won't ask for a new thing for the next year."

"Go to all this trouble for a twelve hours' holiday!" he replied, with his obstinacy aroused in a second. "Never, Mrs. Bowser. We came out here to find rest and peace. It's just the place for it. Do you suppose we are to be driven back home by a tramp, an owl, and a dog? Not much. We stay here for the summer."

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to bury me out among the weeds."

"There'll be no funeral. I am already feeling better for the pure air, and in a week you won't know yourself. Look at that sunrise and tell me if you ever saw anything to beat it. Italy never furnished a sunrise like that. I'll go down to the road to have a better look at it while cook is getting breakfast."

When Mr. Bowser reached the gate he found Dusty Jim seated on a log opposite. The tramp rose up and removed his hat and bowed.

"Do you want another licking?" was shouted at him across the gate.

"No, kind sir," he humbly replied. "I'm a beaten man, and a beaten man don't want any more of it. But I came back to see if you wouldn't really tell me how it was done. I'm wantin' to lick Highway Bill, and if you'll show me the trick I'll run him out of the country."

Mr. Bowser rubbed his hands and opened the gate, and Dusty Jim fled for the third time. M. Quad.

Next Week: **"He Does a Little Investigating at his Country Place."**

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# A Narrative of the Future.

THERE was trouble in the Central Rain Producing Company. The last order for a two-hours' rain had not been satisfactorily accomplished.

The rain had only lasted twenty minutes, and as this company made a speciality of guaranteeing the length of storms, or money refunded, this job had been a losing one for them, both in pocket and reputation.

Wallace Carlton was held to blame for the failure, as he had used his new explosive in the balloon that was sent up without consulting the company who employed him.

Wallace had insisted that there was no fault in his explosive, but that the failure was wholly due to the fuse being too long, thereby allowing the balloon to get too far away before exploding. His explosive in a balloon travelled more rapidly than the other kinds used.

But Mr. Wilson, manager of the company, was not to be appeased, and Wallace was officially notified that the company no longer desired his services.

"This is only an excuse," Wallace muttered; "the real reason for my discharge is that he knows I love his daughter. But I will prove the value of my explosive to his cost, and I will win Ethel yet."

A week from that day was the time set for a grand *fête* on Mr. Wilson's grounds in honour of a certain influential political friend.

Wallace determined that the *fête* should be deluged with such a rain as the most successful explosions had never yet brought upon this earth.

But Fate had another victory in store for him. That same morning Ethel Wilson had started homeward on the air-ship *Pegasus*. It proved a most disastrous voyage, for a few minutes after the start there was blown against them a balloon, sent up for a small local shower, which exploded as it struck the *Pegasus*.

Fortunately, it was of the smallest size (known as the lawn-sprinkler balloon), and the *Pegasus*, though badly shaken up, was not blown to atoms, as would have been the case had the balloon been of the regular rainstorm size.

One of her hydrogen gas compartments remained unhurt, and the *Pegasus* still floated slowly along, though entirely unmanageable.

Floating thus it came into the view of Wallace Carlton, who was watching the slow ascent of a rain balloon just sent up by the man who had been promoted to his place.

Wallace saw with horror that the air-ship must be blown to powder when the balloon exploded. Suddenly he remembered that Ethel was coming home in the *Pegasus* this very trip.

There was no thought in his mind of his own risk; his only thought was that he must save Ethel. His private flying-machine was anchored near. He looked at his watch.

In just two minutes the balloon would explode; he knew exactly the workings of those slow, old-fashioned things. Could he possibly reach it and extinguish the fuse in time?

Springing into his machine he weighed anchor and darted upward, steering straight for the slowly-ascending balloon. It seemed ages to him as he flew upward, straight and true as a bullet.

On came the *Pegasus*. Would he be in time, and would he do it?

There was no time for slackening speed as he neared the balloon. He must sail by close enough to reach the fuse, yet not to collide with the balloon, or he would explode it with the concussion.

It was a beautiful and neat piece of airmanship.

Now he could see the fuse. It was burning not four inches from the balloon! He leaned far out as he swept by, and firmly grasped the fuse in one hand.

His hand will carry through life the scar where the slow match burned deep into it before it was extinguished.

But Ethel was safe.

He could see her leaning over the side of the *Pegasus*, white with terror.

Wallace sailed up to the disabled air-ship, and threw her a rope; then he slowly descended with the *Pegasus* in tow, and landed on the firm earth in safety.

[Continued and concluded after the manner of the nineteenth-century novels; for the onward march of science makes no change in human hearts.]

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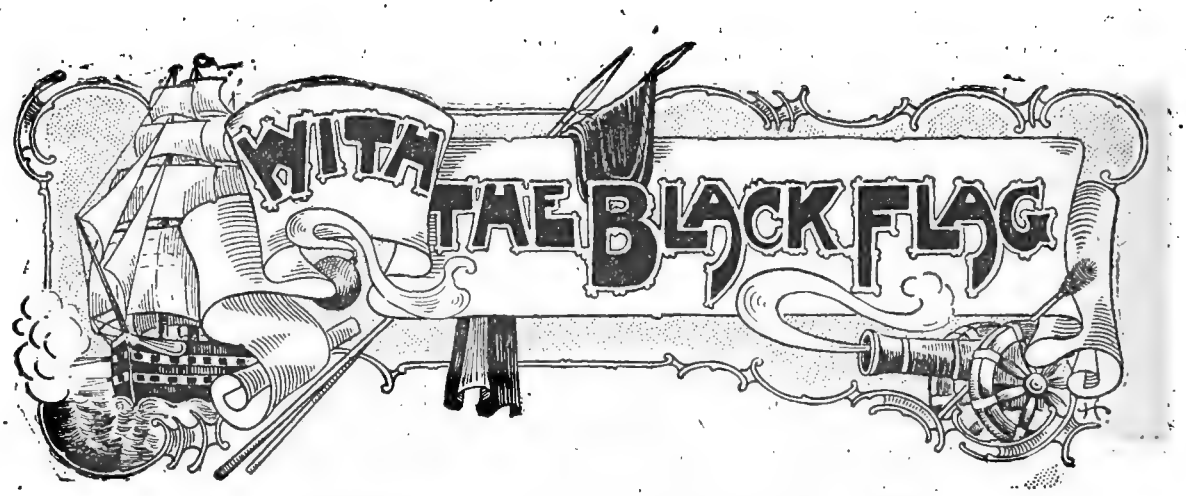


## A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By WILLIAM WESTALL.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

Major Wyvenhoe leaves England on the *Campanella* with a detachment of troops, raised by Major Burnish, to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. Major Burnish is accompanied on the vessel by his wife. At Cork a detachment of Irishmen is taken on board, together with General Molyneux, who is connected with the Venezuelan Army, his secretary and chaplain. When the vessel has been out a few days Major Burnish meets with a fatal accident, and on that same day a mutiny breaks out among the troops, but it is speedily quelled.

Shortly after this Venezuela is reached, and as Captain Cautley does not know the coast well a pilot has to be obtained, and it is found that Conroy, one of the chief mutineers, is able to act as such, and the course of the ship is intrusted to him.

On arrival at Pampatar Major Wyvenhoe and Captain Cautley are received by the Governor, General Arismendez, and his second in command, General Urdenetta.

During the stay there of the *Campanella* the British officers are lavishly entertained, and Major Wyvenhoe excites the jealousy of Arismendez' son, Ramon, owing to his attentions to a Spanish lady. This results in a challenge, and a duel is about to commence when Arismendez appears on the scene and stops it, and just at this time the alarm guns from the fort are heard, on which Arismendez orders everyone to their posts.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### An Encounter with the Enemy.

The governor's stirring words were followed by a general stampede, everybody bolting from the grove and making for the beach, in a state of great excitement, except the skipper, who took it all very coolly.

"You need not call out the troops. I don't think there is going to be an invasion," he remarked to Arismendez in broken Spanish, having by this time acquired a sufficient knowledge of the language to make himself intelligible.

"The alarm guns are only fired when danger threatens, and I know of no danger but invasion," answered the general curtly. "And look, what is that?"

"A rocket from the *Campanella*."

And then Cautley explained that by putting two and two together—Conroy's scarcely veiled threat and the movements of the sloops, which had been reinforced by several flecheras, as reported by fishermen and others, he had come to the conclusion that an attempt would be made before long to cut out the brig, and as it was just as likely to be made that night as any other, he had arranged for a boat to be sent seaward on a reconnoitring expedition, with orders to fire a rocket if anything suspicious were seen, which was to be repeated by the ship as a warning to us.

"And I suppose," he added, "that the commandant of the fort, thinking that the rockets betokened danger, fired the alarm guns?"

"Which shows that he was on the alert, and he did quite right."

"At any rate you did not see the rockets," retorted Arismendez sharply.

"I should have done but for the duel, which I had no reason to expect. All the same, we can beat off the dons without calling the entire population to arms. The wind is too light for the sloops to venture among the shallows. It can only be a boat attack. But we shall soon know. I am going on board right away."

"Is there nothing we can do?"

"Of course there is. Here are two flecheras close inshore. Put fifty soldiers and a few sailors on board each of them, and let them join us as soon as possible, and I should like Major Wyvenhoe to bring two or three score of his men for service on board."

"It shall be done, Señor Capitan," answered the governor and Cautley, stepping into his gig, went off to his ship.

I saw at once that Arismendez was a bold leader; his orders were clear, peremptory, to the point and promptly obeyed.

One of the flecheras which were brought to the jetty was to be manned by Englishmen and commanded by Martley, the other by natives under the command of Don Ramon, but both were to place themselves at Captain Cautley's disposal and strictly obey his injunctions.

"Disobedience will be punished with death," said the governor sternly, a warning which, as I thought, was given for the special benefit of his son, whose hot temper might lead him to refuse obedience to an Englishman and take a line of his own.

Flecheras, it may be well to explain, are narrow boats from thirty-five to a hundred feet long, carrying one gun or more, generally two-masted, yet easily rowed, and admirably adapted by their build and light draught for service in shallow waters.

While the two in question were being prepared for action I was getting my detachment together, and it was so

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smartly done that we ran under the *Campanella's* counter in little more than half-an-hour after the alarm, and several minutes ahead of the flecheras.

So soon as we were aboard the boats were sent back, and when the flecheras came alongside they were ordered to remain there pending further developments, the troops and seamen being meanwhile enjoined to observe strict silence.

We found the brig cleared for action and the men at quarters, though it was, as yet, uncertain whether we should be attacked. The people who had been out reconnoitring reported having seen two big ships and the vague outline of several large boats under the lee of a small island some six miles to the southward, on which they hurried back, and when they sighted the lights of Pampatar sent up a couple of rockets.

"The big ships are no doubt the sloops, and the large boats flecheras or launches," said Cautley. "I am pretty sure the dons did not see the rockets, and hope they did not hear the guns, for if they think we are on the alert they may not attack, which would be a disappointment after all the trouble we have taken."

"Why not send the boat again?" I asked.

"It would be of no use and might do harm. We cannot be more prepared than we are, and if Conroy, who is sure to be there, were to catch sight of the boat, he would draw conclusions. We must just wait, and it won't be a long wait either, for if the villains don't come soon they won't come at all. It will be daylight in two hours. But we cannot both talk and listen. There is noise enough already. Pass the word for silence, Mr. Pritt."

The order was obeyed, all voices were hushed, and the skipper and the rest of us, leaning over the rail and bulwarks, peered into the darkness, listening intently.

Soon a faint rhythmic sound, like the splash of oars, was heard above the ripple of the tide. Gradually it grew more distinct, and presently, through the night glass, could be distinguished shadowy forms moving on the face of the water.

Cautley gave a grunt of satisfaction, and a murmur, which sounded like a cheer, ran round the ship.

The skipper's idea was to make no sign until our assailants were so near as to be easily seen, then to give them a broadside, followed by a volley of musketry, and at them with the flecheras and the corvette's launch, which was lowered and ready. But Conroy was too crafty to fall in with the skipper's plan. He made what soldiers would call a front attack, thereby exposing his boats to the fire of one gun only—the bow-chaser, instead of eight. There were four of them, flecheras of the largest class, each carrying two pivot-guns, and, as presently appeared, crowded with men.

When the leading boat came near enough to serve as a target we gave her a shot from the bow-chaser, which, though it went home, and probably did some execution, failed to stop her. On this all the flecheras let fly, most of the balls missing, though one hit the foremast, and the other took off a man's head.

"The beggars mean boarding," said the skipper to Martley and Don Ramon. "Be prepared, and as they run under our bows, fire slap into them with your two guns, then a volley of musketry, close action and cold steel."

To which Martley answered, "Ay, ay, sir," and Don Ramon, "*Con mucho gusto, Señor Capitan* (with great pleasure, Mr. Captain)."

The flecheras were so low in the water that the bow-chaser was of little use, and as they drew near of no use at all.

Then came the tug of war, the Spaniards attacking us with a boldness and resolution I never saw surpassed. Though engaged at close quarters by our flecheras and the launch, and assailed by a murderous musketry fire from the ship, they ranged alongside, and nearly a hundred big black fellows, who climbed like monkeys and fought like wild cats, succeeded in getting on board. In the end, though only after a desperate hand-to-hand struggle, all, except a few who jumped overboard, were slain. Yield they would not, go back they could not, for a cold shot, dropped into the nearest Spanish fiechera, had started a plank and sunk her, and our flecheras and the launch, still hotly engaged, had thrust themselves between the others and the brig, all being so intermingled that it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe.

After a desperate hand-to-hand struggle all were slain.

"The black fellows are Zambos," said General Arismendez, "and Zambos neither give nor take quarter nor fear death."

The defeat of the Zambos was the end of the battle. The Spaniards, having lost one of their flecheras and half their men, beat a retreat, unpursued except by a few futile shots from the bow-chaser and the boats.

Our losses were also heavy, and many of us were hurt. Martley, Don Ramon, and Pritt rather badly; Cautley had a nasty cut on the head, and myself several wounds which, however, though unpleasant, were not serious.

Altogether it had been a stirring night, and even keen fighters like the skipper and Don Ramon were quite satisfied, except with the result, Cautley having counted on capturing or destroying at least two of the enemy's boats.

General Arismendez, on the contrary, thought we had done exceedingly well, saying that but for the danger signals and the skipper's foresight the brig must have been cut out, and that fighting Zambos, of whom the fiechera's crews were mainly composed, was a very different matter to fighting Spaniards or Creoles.

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Zambos, he explained, are a mixed breed, descended from fugitive slaves who have taken to the woods and intermarried with Indians. In feature and physique more African than American, they combine great strength with an untameable ferocity, delighting even more in carnage than battle, and fighting only to kill. Though more friendly to the patriots than the royalists, they never hesitate to take the side which pays the best and promises the most bloodshed.

I agreed with Arismendez. The attack was well planned and ably led, and had we been less thoroughly prepared might have succeeded. It was so well-timed, indeed, as to suggest a suspicion that the Spaniards had heard about the ball, the date of which was a matter of common knowledge at Pampatar ten days or a week before it came off, and thought to take us unawares. I asked the general if this were possible.

"Quite," he said. "There are traitors everywhere. Nothing is easier than to get secret intelligence from Cumana, if you like to pay the price, and I suppose it is just as easy for the Spaniards to get intelligence from Pampatar on the same terms."

It was the general opinion that Conroy had piloted the flecheras and probably commanded the expedition, but as to this and also whether he was alive or dead, no information was forthcoming—for a very good reason, we had taken no prisoners, and as there was barely enough light to distinguish between black faces and white, he might have fallen or escaped without being recognised. Some of the Spanish dead were stripped before being thrown overboard and papers had been found which, when they were examined, might solve the mystery. These were of course handed to the governor.

My quarters were at the posada, an inn of modest pretensions with a patio (inner court), a verandah, and a very obliging posadero, where I had a large chamber with bare white-washed walls, furnished with a truckle bed, one chair and a washstand, and infested, especially at night, by rats, cockroaches and mosquitoes. For which cause I had hitherto slept in a hammock slung in the patio, but as I was weak with loss of blood and my wounds rendered rest for a few days imperative, I had to keep to my room, the patio being available only at night. Yet I had no reason to complain of my lot, John Ready catered for me and kept me company, and visitors came every day. One of the first was Señor Don Esteban Sidonia with kind inquiries and a beautiful nosegay from his wife and Inez, his daughter, and an intimation that when I was sufficiently recovered to get about it would give him great pleasure to place his house and all that it contained at my disposal.

It was his way of asking me to become his guest, but as I had not fallen in love with his daughter and it would have been as much as my life was worth to accept the invitation, the young lady having many admirers and Ramon and Arismendez many friends, I gave Don Esteban hearty thanks and an evasive answer.

Another visitor was General Urdenetta, who after some fulsome compliments began to ask insidious questions and make innuendos against the governor, whom he accused of incapacity, and more than hinted that affairs would be much better managed if the Supreme Chief were to provide him with a successor. To which I replied that these were matters that did not concern me, but that, personally, I held the governor in esteem and considered him my friend. On this Urdenetta protested that he also had a great regard for the governor, and tried to laugh the matter off as though he had been jesting, but with an ill grace, and I saw that by refusing his advances I had incurred his enmity.

On the following day came General Arismendez, looking very serious. After we had exchanged inquiries and compliments he said that he had a bit of paper to show me. It was found in one of the Spaniards' pockets, and answered the question I had asked him. The bit of paper was an unsigned letter without address, consisting of a single sentence: "On the night of next Monday week the governor gives a ball at which all the military officers and the officers of the *Campanella* will be present."

"So you were right," he added.

"You also," quoth I; "but who is the spy—or the traitor?"

"I think I know, yet fear I cannot prove. Compare the handwriting of the unsigned letter with this" (handing me another letter) "but don't look at the signature, which is on the other leaf, until you have given your opinion."

After carefully comparing them I said that despite some slight differences I had no doubt that both letters were in the same hand.

"Now turn over the leaf."

Which I did. It was signed "Urdenetta."

"But it is not possible. Why should the general commit such an infamy? What conceivable motives——"

"Mainly to injure me; incidentally to injure you English, whom he detests. Urdenetta is intriguing to supplant me, had the *Campanella* been taken I should have been blamed for inviting her officers to my wife's ball, instead of leaving them on board to look after the ship, and my enemies, both here and at Angostura, would have made the most of it."

"But why should he hate us? We are fighting for the same cause."

"Out of jealousy. Jealousy and greed are our bane. I think they are in our blood. If our leaders would pull honestly and harmoniously together, making the country their first thought, we should be rid of the Spaniards within the year. If the royalist generals would cease thwarting each other, robbing the king and starving their troops, we should be subjugated in six months. But you must not think we are all alike. There are a few, of whom I hope I am one, whose only aim is their country's good."

"It is all very strange," I said, still incredulous, "but why don't you put Urdenetta under arrest and have him tried by court-martial?"

"Because I have no positive proof of his treachery, and he is protected by Bolivar, who is jealous of Congress, from whom, and not from him, I hold my appointment."

"Which is the higher power?"

"Congress, of course, whose minister and servant he is, or ought to be; but practically he is, as he likes to call himself, the supreme chief. I am speaking to you very openly, Major Wyvenhoe, but you are an English caballero, and will not abuse my confidence. It is only among the higher ranks that you will find the jealousies, and greed, and ambition of which I have spoken. The common people, both civilians and soldiers, though ignorant, are honest and brave. All the same, I must sorrowfully admit that we have more to hope from the faults of our enemies than our own virtues."

The governor was so much put about by Urdenetta's treachery, and his mood so gloomy, that I attached less importance to this conversation than I otherwise should have done. I thought he exaggerated; I could not believe that the patriot leaders were such scamps, and the Republic in so bad a way, as General Arismendez made out.

A few days later his cares were increased by the arrival of a part of the British legion, some two thousand strong, under General English, who was, of course, an Irishman.

There was some difficulty in finding them quarters, but the chief difficulty was finding them something to eat. The governor's repeated applications to the government for money and supplies had elicited only vague answers, or fine promises that we were still to keep, and he had absolutely nothing to give the troops but sugar-cane, which could be got for the asking, or at any rate, for the cutting.

This, for men who thought they were coming to a land flowing with milk and honey, was distinctly disappointing, and I was not surprised to hear that there was a good deal of grumbling and some apprehension of mutiny. Discipline

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was relaxed, drills were discontinued. For as the only way of extracting the sugar was chewing the cane, the men had time for little else. They were always either chewing or smoking, tobacco being as plentiful as cane, as also, unfortunately, was rum.

Money there was none, nor had been for weeks. Except the pound apiece I had given the men of my battalion they had not received a penny; the officers had received nothing.

Neither had Mrs. Barnish, though she had sent particulars of her claim to Angostura with a pressing request, supported by the governor, for an immediate payment on account. The poor lady was in despair, and Cautley wildly indignant, both on her account and his own. Being dependent on his pay he had no money except what I, thanks to an open credit on a house at Port-of-Spain, had been able to lend him, and his sailors were as badly off for rations as were our soldiers.

"I won't stand this any longer, neither will my crew," he said one day. "They cannot chew enough sugar-cane to keep themselves alive, and their jaws ache so at night that they cannot sleep a wink. I am off on a cruise, and I will either make a fat prize or go below. My fellows are so sick of sugar-cane that they would tackle a three-decker if they thought there was any hard tack and salt pork on board of her."

"You had better speak to the governor first."

"I have done, and he says that though he has strict orders to detain the *Campanella* until the arrival of Admiral Brion's squadron, he can see no further than anybody else after dark."

"Which means that if you like to slip away unobserved you may try your luck."

"Also I take it, that if I am successful I need not fear further troubles. If I am not, Margarita will see me no more. I shall weigh to-night at the turn of tide, so good-bye for the present, old man."

The disappearance of the brig caused some excitement and gave rise to a good deal of talk and more or less malicious gossip. General Urdenetta was especially curious on the subject, and asked both the governor and myself whether we had authorised El Capitan to go, or knew whither he was gone, to both of which questions we gave decided negatives.

But the excitement rose to fever heat when, a week later, the *Campanella* sailed in, followed by a full-rigged ship with the Venezuelan flag at her peak and under the Spanish ensign reversed.

The beach was crowded with spectators, most of whom were soldiers chewing sugar-cane. Urdenetta and I boarded the brig so soon as she let go. He had invited himself to accompany me, and pretended to be very friendly.

The skipper was all smiles and I could see by the faces of the crew that they had been feeding on something more substantial than sugar.

"Why did you go off without saying anything?" I asked him (glancing at Urdenetta), "and where have you been?"

"I have been on a cruise and taken a prize, *La Stella*, bound from Cadiz to Maracaibo. There she is, what do you think of her?"

"A very fine ship. I congratulate you, Señor Capitan. What is her cargo?" demanded the general.

"A few bales of clothing for the troops—wine, biscuits, salt pork, salt beef, salt fish and a few dollars and doubloons."

"Doubloons! Did you say doubloons, Señor Capitan?" cried Urdenetta, his little black eyes glittering with greed.

"Si, Señor General, I said doubloons."

"Are there many, Señor Capitan? But you have not counted them, perhaps, if so——"

"I have counted the cases; they tally with the number set down in the ship's manifest, and contain twenty thousand."

"Twenty thousand! Madre de Dios! Twenty thousand gold doubloons! Where are they, Señor Capitan, where are they?" and Urdenetta's fingers worked with an eager claw-like action as though they were raking in money.

"I have them safe. You may be sure I did not leave them on board the prize."

"But they will be very much safer ashore, Señor Capitan, The *Campanella* might be sunk or be cut out by the Spaniards. I shall give you a receipt and put them in a strong-room under guard, and in due course you and your brave crew will receive your share of the prize money, so if you will kindly show me——"

"Not quite so fast, Señor General," interrupted the skipper. "Before I part with this treasure there are a few claims to be dealt with. Mrs. Barnish must have two thousand doubloons in part satisfaction of her claim on the government, my men two, and the officers five doubloons a piece, on account of their share of the prize money, and all of us our pay up to date. The balance I shall hand over to General Arismendez and yourself, against your receipt, to be disposed of as a prize court may direct."

"But this would be highly irregular, my dear sir, and I cannot possibly sanction such a proceeding. The money must be taken as it is and placed in safe custody until these claims you speak of are investigated."

"Not a doubloon of it shall be taken ashore unless my conditions are accepted. Remember that though the brig has been sold to the Republic she has not been formally transferred, so there is nothing to prevent my sailing away and disposing of her and all she contains on Mrs. Barnish's behalf."

"Did you say doubloons, Senor Capitan?"

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The implied threat was effectual, so frightening Urdenetta that he accepted Cautley's terms without further demur. The dollars and doubloons were brought into his cabin, and the two thousand for Mrs. Barnish counted out and put into bags, and the bags into a box. Next, the officers and men received their pay and the doubloons as agreed. But the skipper took only his pay.

This business being concluded we went ashore escorted by a dozen bluejackets, who carried the treasure, which, on our arrival at the Government House, Cautley made over to the governor and Urdenetta, taking their joint receipts for the full amount, and giving them his own for the sums which he had disbursed and retained. Urdenetta would have made difficulties, but Arismendez overruled him, saying that he was astonished at the captain's moderation, and I could see by Urdenetta's manner that he thought him a fool for taking so little.

"We have brought you something, Mrs. Barnish," said Cautley, as the sailor who carried the box containing the doubloons laid it at her feet.

We had now only to arrange with Mrs. Barnish, whom we found in the patio of the governor's house, reclining in a wicker chair and looking very charming.

"We have brought you something, Mrs. Barnish," said Cautley, as the sailor who carried the box containing the doubloons laid it at her feet. Then to the man, "You and the others wait outside till I come."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"You are very good, but what is it?" asked the lady.

"A payment on account of your claim—a thousand gold doubloons."

"And pray how much is that in sterling money, captain?"

"As nearly as possible six thousand pounds, madam."

"Six thousand pounds! Oh, what a relief! Thank Heaven! I was almost reduced to my last dollar. Now I am independent again. It is nearly half of what they owe me."

"The price of the brig and the cargo, and as the government are now in funds I have no doubt you will obtain a full and speedy settlement of your claim."

"But how was it managed? Whom have I to thank?"

The skipper hesitated, and, seeing that he was too bashful, or too much in love, to tell his tale properly, I told it for him.

Mrs. Barnish was deeply touched, her colour heightened, her eyes filled with tears.

"How good of you, Captain Cautley!" she exclaimed. "How noble! How can I show my gratitude?"

Then she paused, and the skipper whispered something in her ear, and perceiving that I was not wanted I betook myself to the garden and lighted a cigar. When I went back the widow's eyes were very bright and Cautley's face very red.

"We were talking about this money, Major Wyvenhoe," she said, as coolly as though she were speaking the truth. "What shall I do with it? I have neither a strong-box nor a strong-room."

"You might ask General Arismendez to take care of it for you, but the safest, perhaps the only safe place is the brig, and if it be taken there after dark, and the sun will set in half an hour, nobody will be the wiser; and, if I were you, Mrs. Barnish, I would be off as soon as possible to Port-of-Spain and lodge the money in a bank. It is only a day's sail, and there is a Trinidad schooner in the harbour that I daresay might be chartered on moderate terms." And noticing that the captain looked rather blank I added: "But even on the brig I would not insure the safety of your money for more than twenty-four hours. We may get the route at any moment, Admiral Brion's squadron is expected almost immediately, and there is talk of an expedition to the Main."

"I think you are quite right, Major; don't you, Captain Cautley?"

"I am sure he is. The sooner you and the doubloons are under the British flag the better," rejoined the skipper.

"Then will you kindly see the captain of the schooner and arrange with him?"

"This very night, madam."

"And I can give you a letter of introduction to the house at Port-of-Spain, on which I have a credit. They will arrange your business and give you a hospitable reception, and you might stay there until Cautley and I obtain a final settlement of your claim on the Republic," I remarked.

"That is just what I should like. I have no desire to go home just yet."

On this the skipper brightened up, and night having fallen, we took our leave and carried off the doubloons.

"That was a good idea of yours," said Cautley as we walked to the jetty. "You were thinking of your friend with the little black eyes and rake-like fingers, weren't you? I know I was."

"Yes, he knows we brought the money, but he won't know we have taken it back. But you have not told me how you got on with the lady."

"Well, it was this way. When she wanted to know how she could show her gratitude, I said by giving me her love, at which she seemed very much surprised, and said it was quite out of the question—at any rate so soon after her late

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husband's death. Then I talked to her a bit, and she said at last that if I really loved her I might speak to her again in a few months. But I presently prevailed on her to say, 'a little while.'"

"So you are virtually engaged. I congratulate you, my dear fellow," quoth I, though remembering Araminta and how likely he was to be jilted, it went against my conscience. If I had been perfectly sincere, I should rather have condoled with him.

"You are very kind and I am very happy," he said simply. "Also nervous. If any harm were to befall her I should never forgive myself. I shall board the schooner at once and if possible arrange for her to sail tomorrow."

In this he succeeded, and on the following evening the widow and her doubloons, accompanied by the second officer, whom Cautley wisely sent with her, set sail for Port-of-Spain.

Mrs. Barnish had a second protector in the person of Father Bartrum, who was heartily sick of Margarita and glad of a chance to get away.

A few hours previously the *Libertad*, a sloop-of-war (as she would be called in our service, though barque rigged), arrived from Angostura with dispatches, and the next morning (the troops having meanwhile received full rations and a modicum of pay) we had a parade of the entire force.

After the "fall out" I returned to my quarters to breakfast, and was half through with my matutinal cigar when Captain Clincher, of the Legion, and a sergeant's guard marched into the patio.

"I've come on a very unpleasant errand, Major," said the captain, who was a man of few words and fewer ideas.

"Indeed! What is it?" I asked.

"To arrest you, I am sorry to say."

"By whose order and on what charge?"

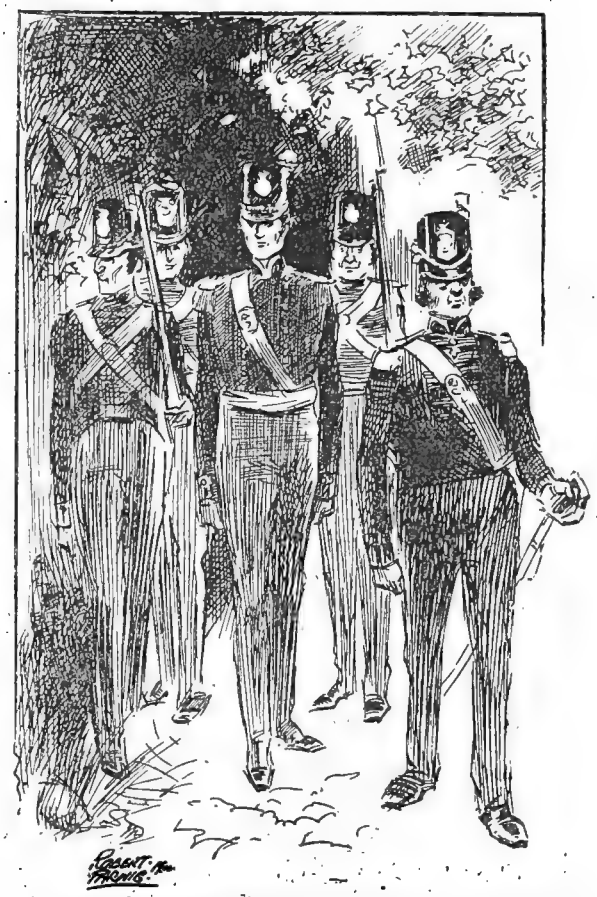
"The governor's. I know nothing about a charge—didn't ask."

"The governor's! Impossible!" I exclaimed.

"Excuse my contradicting you, major, but Colonel Rooke has the governor's written order to have you arrested and taken on board the *Libertad*. Very sorry, but duty is duty."

"I shall go with you, of course, though I am sure there is some mistake. I suppose my servant may follow with my kit?"

"Certainly. No orders against that."



I placed myself at the disposal of Clincher and the guard, and was conducted to the jetty.

On this I told Ready what to do, placed myself at the disposal of Clincher and the guard, and was conducted to the jetty, where a boat was awaiting us.

*(To be continued.)*

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# SHORT STORIES ABOUT VENTRILOQUISTS.

**We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Mystery of the 'Medea,'" by Alex. Vaughan, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. William Inglis, 24 Barrack Street, Perth. Attempts for this week's prize must deal with Stories about Landladies and Lodgers, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, August 20th. Post-cards only, please.**

## From the Lower Regions.

A FEW nights ago loud cries for help were heard proceeding from an open drain in a flourishing Scotch town.

The police arrived, obtained the assistance of some navvies, and dispatched them into the subterranean regions. But the more they explored the louder became the appeals for assistance, and soon the street was crammed with sympathising spectators, who had to be kept back from the mouth of the drain by a cordon of constables.

Cries of "Bunglers!" "Get him out!" "The man will die!" arose from the crowd, which assumed a threatening appearance, so much so that the police compelled it to disperse.

The cries for help now ceased; the ventriloquist who had caused all the commotion having also been compelled to disperse.

W. I.

## It Spoke Without Its Head.

A VENTRILOQUIST was entertaining an audience; the doll was singing "Mary had a little lamb," when its head dropped off and hung by the string.

The ventriloquist, not noticing the mishap, went on and finished the song.

On looking up, he perceived what had happened, and as quick as thought (speaking through the doll), he said: "See what I can do with my neck broken."

F. G. C.

## Next, Please!

IN the commercial room of a Bristol hotel the other night, the subject turned on ventriloquism.

One commercial remarked:

"I once knew a man who was a great ventriloquist. He was practising his favourite amusement in a crowded street one day, when he threw his voice so far away that he lost it, and it took him an hour and a half, with the aid of a policeman, to find it again."

"That's nothing," remarked a little man in the corner with a wink at the rest of the company, "I was at an amateur entertainment last winter when two ventriloquists were giving a performance. They had been throwing their voices to various parts of the room, and at the end it was found that the voices had returned to their wrong owners. When I left they were vainly endeavouring to throw their voices down each other's throats to persuade them to return to their rightful owners."

A. E. T.

## Sold!

M. ALEXANDRE, the famous ventriloquist, was on one occasion passing along the Strand, when a friend desired a specimen of his abilities.

At that instant a load of hay was passing along near Temple Bar, when Alexandre called attention to the suffocating cries of a man in the centre of the hay.

A crowd gathered round and stopped the astonished carter, and demanded why he was carrying a fellow-creature in his hay. The complaints and cries of the smothered man now became painful, and there was every reason to believe he was dying. The crowd, regardless of the stoppage to the traffic, instantly proceeded to unload the hay in the street. The smothered voice urged them to make haste, but the feelings of the people may be imagined when the cart was empty and nobody was found, while Alexandre and his friend walked off laughing at the unexpected result of their trick.

J. H.

## The Ventriloquist Scored.

RECENTLY a well-known ventriloquist, who was taking a journey, just managed to get into the train as it was leaving the station, and had no time to take out a dog ticket for his terrier.

When the cry, "All tickets ready!" was heard a few stations further on, the ventriloquist dropped the dog into a hamper, which was labelled in bold characters, "Professor Jones, Ventriloquist."

When the ticket inspector opened the carriage door the dog began to bark.

The man, noticing the label on the hamper, turned to the ventriloquist with a self-satisfied grin, and said:

"All right, mister, that's verra clever, but ye canna fool me. That trick's been played on me before."

A. H.

## Why He Fled.

A BASHFUL youth was sitting in a state of nervous terror, alongside a young and pretty girl, in an obscure corner of the hall leading to the ball-room.

A young man, who was a bit of a ventriloquist, observed them, however, and pitching his voice to make appear as if it proceeded from the bashful youth, he said:

"Ah—Miss Loveleigh—er—I do love you—er—my dear—will you marry me?"

With a scream of terror the bashful man fled, leaving his companion in grave doubts as to his mental condition.

W. H.

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## How He Got a Front Seat.

At a concert once, all the seats were the same price, and there was a great rush to get front seats.

A certain gentleman (a ventriloquist) wanted to get a front seat, so when the manager appeared on the stage to announce that a certain song was to be sung, he threw his voice on the stage, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to say there will be no performance to-night"

The people went out disgusted, while the ventriloquist took a front seat.

The concert went on just the same afterwards.

G. B.

## The Professor Ran.

The whole of the villagers seemed to have squeezed themselves into the diminutive public hall to witness the wonderful entertainment of Professor Vox, the marvellous ventriloquist.

For some time the Professor kept his audience alternately gaping with awe and vociferously applauding his clever performance.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I will imitate the voice of a man on the roof of this hall."

"Are you there?" he called in his natural voice.

"Yes, sir," replied an astonishingly natural voice coming apparently from the roof outside.

"Where are you?" shouted the Professor.

There was a sudden clatter on the slates, a dark body crashed through the skylight and fell into the midst of the audience.

"Here I am, sir," said the "voice."

Two seconds later the Professor was giving the villagers an exhibition of his wonderful sprinting powers.

W. J. O.

## The Audience was "Sold."

A popular ventriloquist in the north was given a benefit some time ago, and announced that he would endeavour to surpass himself on the occasion.

On the eventful evening the building was crowded in every part, and when the beneficiaire's "turn" came it was seen that the number of his performing figures was considerably larger than usual, and were arranged on chairs in a semi-circle, after the manner of a minstrel troupe.

Going behind each figure in turn he so manipulated them that his audience was astounded.

Classical, humorous, and patriotic items were rendered in perfect taste and with marked ability; and the movements of each figure was so lifelike and natural that the "house" was completely carried away, and round after round of applause greeted the clever artiste.

At the close of his performance the applause was renewed; but as he bowed himself off the stage the audience was considerably astonished to see the figures rise, one by one, and walk off after him.

Then their applause gave way to roars of laughter, for it suddenly dawned upon them that they had been "sold."

And so it proved, for the "figures" were well-known concert artistes, each of whom had volunteered to act in that capacity on the occasion of their old friend's benefit.

A. V.

## Equal to the Occasion.

At one of the London halls a short time ago, Lieutenant Frank Travis, the ventriloquist, was amusing the audience with his merry family of dummies. Nearing the end of his performance, one of the dummies is supposed to ask the following question:

"If a child is born in England of German parents, what nationality is it?"

"English," shouted the ventriloquist.

"Wrong," was the supposed reply. And so the argument went on, until the ventriloquist said at last that he would leave it to the waiter to settle, and whatever he said should decide the supposed argument.

"Waiter!" shouted out the ventriloquist at the top of his voice. "Now, then, what's it to be, English or German?"

The old waiter, who had been busy all the evening, not knowing what was going on, looked up, and amidst roars of laughter shouted back:

"A drop of Scotch, please!" W. L.

## Mr. Bowser Learning Ventriloquism.

"Mr. Bowser, what on earth are you doing?" asked Mrs. Bowser, as she rushed into the drawing-room, almost frightened out of her wits by the dreadful noise which had proceeded from it.

Mr. Bowser had the cat on his knee, and was pinching that poor animal's tail, and, as it screamed with pain, he tried to imitate its voice.

"Mrs. Bowser," calmly remarked her lesser half, fairly mesmerising her with his glaring eyes, "I am developing my vocal organs. By the aid of this so-called dumb animal, I shall in a few moments, by practice, be able to imitate the mewing of a cat to perfect——" But at this moment the Bowser cat, in a fit of desperation, bit its master's hand, and that gentleman's voice put a complete legion of moonlight howlers in the shade.

When he had somewhat cooled down, he turned to Mrs. Bowser with an injured air, and said:

"Woman, all is over between us, by your interference my hand will have to be cut off. Leave this house at once, and take your ungrateful cat with you. Don't expostulate, madam, you and your infernal cat have ruined me, and I wash my hands of the pair of you," and Mr. Bowser slowly walked from the room.

J. W. H.

## The Last Straw.

A young man, in flannels and straw hat, was wheeling a perambulator backwards and forwards along the pavement in front of an imposing set of flats. The hot afternoon sun poured pitilessly down upon him, and he was angry as any man could be.

"My dear!" came a voice from an upper window.

"What's the matter?" he shrieked back. "Let me alone, can't you?"

And he went on wheeling.

An hour later the same voice came from the same window, in earnest, pleading tones:

"George, dear!"

"Well, what's the matter now?" he shouted. "Have the water-pipes burst?"

"No, George, dear," wailed the voice; "the water-pipes are all right, but you've been wheeling Lottie's doll all the afternoon. Hadn't you better let baby have a turn now?"

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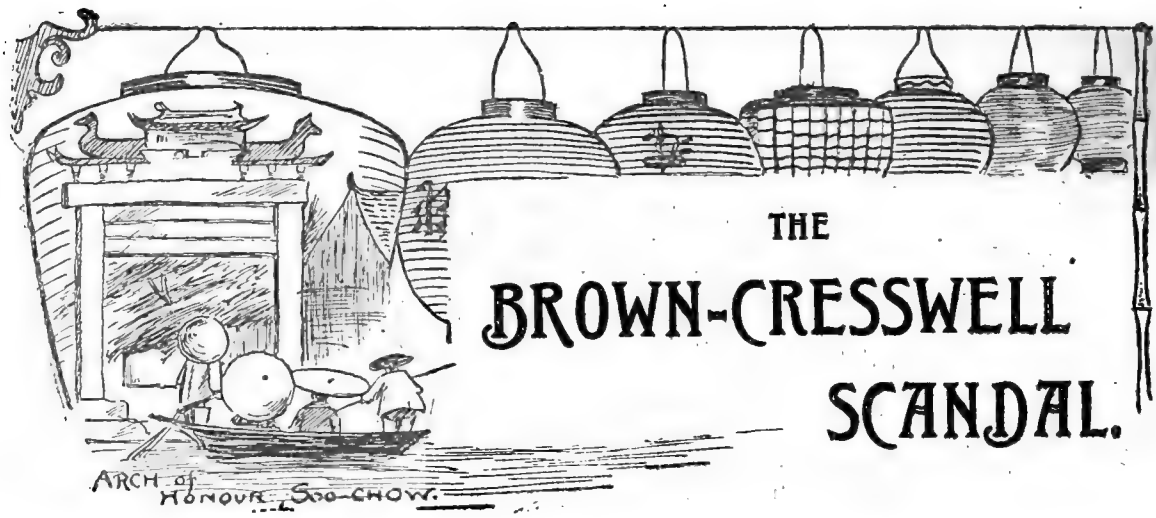


# THE BROWN-CRESSWELL SCANDAL.

"It's a fact, I assure you," quoth little Mrs. Brown solemnly, glancing over the top of her spectacles at the circle of ladies plying their needles in the cause of the Geddesdon poor.

"You don't say so," gasped her neighbour, Mrs. Smith, stopping for a moment with her needle poised on high. "How intensely shocking!"

"To think of the serpent we have nourished in our midst," broke in another.

"It is really very sad that one's kindness should be betrayed in such a manner. What shall you do about the new district, dear Mrs. Spinks? Of course it is not possible that this—er—person should work amongst us any more."

Poor Mrs. Spinks, wife of the Rev. Spottiswood Spinks, Rector of Geddesdon, looked up with a little appeal in her soft, brown eyes. She was a kind-hearted little soul when left to herself, and it vexed her to hear these unkind remarks made about the stranger who had lately come into their circle.

"I do not think she can do any harm to the people she visits, Mrs. Hobbs," she answered gently. "She has already won the hearts of those she has been to see. Besides, what proof have we that these rumours have any truth in them?"

"What proof?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown indignantly. "Why, Mrs. Spinks, have I not already told you that it was my own brother, who knows the doctor, who lives three doors off them at Notting H ll who wrote and told me all about them a fortnight ago? And this morning I had another letter from him confirming all that he had said before—that their goings on were terrible, and that no decent-minded people would visit them. You can hardly expect me to doubt my brother's word, Mrs. Spinks," concluded Mrs. Brown with a decidedly aggressive, ill-meaning sniff, as she resumed her work, which in her excitement she had dropped for a moment.

"Of course not, of course not," hastily responded the Rector's wife. "Did you ask for buttons, Mrs. Jones? Here are some," and she tried to turn the discussion into another channel.

But it was of no use. Another worker, Miss Anne Bruce, had been absent from the town a week or two, and had missed the heart of the subject in hand.

"What is it that is rumoured against her?" she asked. "One hears all sorts of things but nothing definite. It would hardly be fair to ostracize a girl for the sake of an indefinite report."

Mrs. Brown bristled again.

"I tell you it is not indefinite, Miss Bruce," she said. "The story is—as you will have it, only don't accuse me of scandal-making after you have insisted on hearing it—that she is the daughter of a card-sharper, who has several times only just escaped detection. They say that she was the trap set to catch the poor young men. It is said," and she lowered her voice ominously, "that troops of young men used to flock there at all hours. Now you can see why this person is not a fit associate for us who are, however feebly, trying to do our duty. And I have my brother's word for it," she finished, closing her mouth with a little snap, as if that settled the whole matter beyond dispute.

Silence fell on the group of workers. Certainly to some of them, the working party that afternoon seemed to be more interesting than usual, and they were astonished when the clock struck five and the Rector came in to read a prayer before they went to have some tea. They were all extremely devout, joining in the Lord's Prayer with more earnestness and unanimity than usual.

Many events do not happen at Geddesdon-on-Sea. Most of its inhabitants are fisher-folk, there being only a slight sprinkling of better-class people. It was a picturesque town, particularly from the river, which formed a natural harbour, with the sand dunes on one side of it, and the homes of the fishermen, with their pretty roofs, on the other. Further back on the land, the town was struggling to become a fashionable sea-side resort, indeed, already on the southern cliff had sprung up a large and modern hotel, built in red brick, and run on all the latest lines by an enterprising, if inartistic, company.

Millicent Cresswell and her father had taken a tiny cottage on the cliff for six months, to restore the latter to health after a long and serious illness. He was now a great deal better after some weeks of the bracing East coast air, and his daughter felt free to avail herself of the kindness of her neighbour's invitations to call upon them.

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She had joined the Rectory work-party, going to it whenever she thought her father was well enough to be left for a whole afternoon. She had been obliged to miss two Fridays lately, having been confined to the house with a cold, and one day her father was not so well.

Meanwhile slander had been busy with them both, and was doing her best to make up a nice little history which, if Millicent and her father could have heard, they would have laughed at, and gone their way untroubled.

But they heard nothing; consequently, about a fortnight later, Millicent presented herself at the Rectory door and was admitted to the drawing-room, all unconscious of the chilly atmosphere in which she would find herself.

The girl looked like a summer butterfly flown by mistake into a winter garden filled with everlastings. Her fair young freshness contrasted so strongly with these worthy townsfolk who considered themselves smirched if they should so much as touch the hem of her garment. For the weed of scandal had flourished like a green bay-tree, and Millicent Cresswell was now designated as "that dreadful girl."

Mrs. Spinks came forward to greet her as she entered. There was a certain nervousness in her manner, and her cheek were a little flushed as she led her to a seat in a far corner of the room by the window.

"You will get a better light there." she said as she glanced round in an appealing way at the rest of her workers.

There had been somewhat of a hot discussion before Millicent had come in.

"I will not be in the same room with her," asserted Mrs. Brown. "I consider that persons of her sort should be shown that respectable people cannot associate with them; that at any rate Geddesdon-on-Sea will not lower its standard," and she gave her usual sniff, jerking her thread so sharply as to break it.

However, Mrs. Spinks had held her own, having refused to give the maid any directions as to the non-admission of Miss Cresswell.

Now, the girl was here, in her drawing-room, and nearly half of her workers were packing up their garments, prepared to guard their morals and leave the Rector's wife in the lurch.

"It was her own fault," they said as they let themselves out at the hall door, whilst every nose showed in its own particular manner the excessive virtuosity of its owner.

The working party was now much reduced in numbers, but Millicent was quite unconscious that she was the cause of the sudden exodus. She and the rest enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon.

Somehow the atmosphere of the room seemed lighter and freer now that Mrs. Brown was not in it. Mrs. Spinks thought so at any rate; therefore, when her husband came in at five o'clock, he found a very happy party, and after prayers they had the merriest tea imaginable, though the rector, who of course knew all about it, was grieved to find that so many of his parishioners lacked the charity which thinketh no evil.

That evening, the Rev. Spottiswood and his wife put their heads together. It was a terrible scandal, which must either be recognised and the Cresswells given to understand that their society was no longer appreciated, or it must be stamped out.

"I do not believe that there is a word of truth in the whole story," said Mrs. Spinks indignantly. "Mrs. Brown is a born scandal-monger, and her brother is as bad, and all the other old women are cats, who follow their leader."

"Hush! hush! my dear," interposed the rector through a smile that belied his words. "Cats or not, they are my parishioners, and must be propitiated. Let us sleep over the matter. No doubt we shall come to a solution of the difficulty in the morning."

But woman-like, Mrs. Spinks could not leave the matter alone until she had hit upon some plan. She lay still, thinking hard for some hours, when with scant mercy she awoke her sleepy spouse.

"Spottiswood," she said, "Spottiswood, do wake up; I've got an idea."

With a groan her husband moved.

"Eh? What? An idea? Have you, my dear? Ah! alright," and soon he was once more snoring peacefully.

This was not sympathetic, as Mrs. Spinks felt, but with the satisfaction of a difficulty solved, she, too, turned over to enjoy the sleep of the just.

In the morning Mrs. Spinks rose rather early, got through her household duties, donned her medium best gown, and set out to visit Millicent at the cottage on the cliff. She was shown into the little drawing-room, sweet with the scent of narcissi and daffodils, and whilst waiting, took up an odd volume lying on the table.

Glancing through carelessly, she let fall an envelope, which had evidently been slipped in between the leaves. Thinking it might be a mark, she picked it up hastily and was just going to replace it when the address caught her eye:

"Lady Millicent Cresswell,
"The Towers,
Conston, Leicestershire."

Mrs. Spinks' eyes opened wide as she read. What did this mean? Lady Millicent Cresswell!

Was it possible that the girl of whom such terrible things were being said, was none other than one of the Cresswells of the Towers, of whom everyone knew, and whose family had for ages done their work in England's glorious history!

The poor little woman was almost transfixed with horror.

What idiots these Geddesdon women had made of themselves! What a mercy that she had come up to see what she could find out!

She started as Millicent touched her on the arm.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "I beg your pardon, but is this you?" and she held the envelope out dramatically to the astonished girl in front of her.

"Why, yes, of course," she laughed. "So you have discovered our secret? Come and sit down, Mrs. Spinks; I will tell you all about it. You know papa has been very ill, and he thought he would like to come here as just 'Mr. Cresswell.' You see," she continued, "we know the Burtons and Oxtons and a good many others, so that if we had come as ourselves, we should have had no peace. However, we are so soon going home now it does not matter. I fear papa will have to give up his hobby of coaching young men at Notting Hill, for the doctor says he must not spend another winter in England."

"Used he to coach young men, Miss—Lady Millicent?" asked Mrs. Spinks somewhat diffidently.

"Yes, Mrs. Spinks. My father loves teaching, and has made it quite a hobby to teach young fellows who cou'd not afford a proper course."

The mystery was solved, and with a light heart Mrs. Spinks set off home. She had told Millicent the whole

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story, and together they concocted a small revenge on the ladies of Geddesdon-on-Sea.

Directly Mrs. Spinks had left Millicent sat down to write to the Burtons and Oxtons, saying that she and her father were spending a short time at Geddesdon, and that if they did not consider it too far to go, she hoped that they would meet at the Rectory garden-party, which she heard was to take place within the next fortnight.

It was the first Thursday after Easter, which was unusually late that year. Already the trees had clad themselves in their fresh young green. The sun, too, had the promise of summer warmth in it, and everything looked bright and glad in the balmy geniality of late spring.

The Rev. Spottiswood and Mrs. Spinks stood waiting for their guests. It was not quite three o'clock, but in Geddesdon people generally arrived about ten minutes before they were invited; it was one of the unalterable ways of the little town. Therefore there was a goodly gathering assembled before Millicent and her father made their appearance.

As they crossed the lawn it is a wonder that they did not sink beneath the glances of surprise and disapproval levied at them. But they passed on quite untroubled, and pretended to be oblivious of the curious amount of backs presented to them as they turned to greet their neighbours. For some minutes Mrs. Spinks' unprecedented behaviour formed the chief topic of conversation. How could her husband have allowed her to do such a thing? It was preposterous, inexcusable, and so on.

Soon however their attention was attracted by the names of the county people being announced. It was only on such occasions as the present that they had the felicity of criticising their country neighbours.

"There is actually old Lady Hancock," whispered Mrs. Brown to Mrs. Hobbs. "What would she say if she knew whose company she was in? There's her ugly daughter, too. Oh! my dear,"—and she clutched Mrs. Hobbs' arm—"just look! there is Lady Hancock going up to that dreadful girl! Can Mrs. Spinks have introduced her? Why—" and her voice rose a little—"she—she is positively kissing her! What an extraordinary thing! My dear Mrs. Hobbs, I ask you, look!"

Mrs. Brown was almost faint from surprise and chagrin, for Lady Hancock, who had not even so much as given her a glance, was walking down one of the primrose-covered paths with her arm affectionately tucked into that of Millicent Cresswell's.

Mrs. Hobbs said nothing, but looked at Mrs. Brown with something of misgiving and annoyance in her eyes.

"You had better come and sit down," she said, "you are looking very hot and uncomfortable."

"It is enough to upset one to see an old lady taken in by an impudent hussy like that," gasped Mrs. Brown, fanning herself vigorously.

"I think I should say no more about that, if I were you," said Mrs. Hobbs significantly. "I am going to talk it over with the others," and rising, regardless of Mrs. Brown's entreaties, she crossed the lawn to Mrs. Spinks. Drawing her aside, she asked boldly:

"Who is Millicent Cresswell?"

Mrs Spinks smiled.

"She is Lady Hancock's great-niece, dear Mrs Hobbs. Lord Conston and Lady Millicent have been staying here quietly as Mr. and Miss Cresswell, but now he is so much stronger, they are taking up their own position again, and it is as pleasant a surprise to their friends to find them here, as it is to us to have been the means of their meeting."

Mrs. Hobbs took a page out of her note-book, on which she scribbled a few words. She then gave it to an under-gardener whom she found busy in one of the gardens, with a request that he would find Mrs. Brown and deliver it to her.

What the words were I cannot tell you. All I do know is that Mrs. Brown's ample figure was seen disappearing out of the vicarage gate before tea had been announced, and no one made any effort to recall her. And somehow I do not fancy that since the Brown-Cresswell episode, scandals have been quite so rife in Geddesdon-on-Sea as before.

GRACE COMBE.

---

MRS. YOUNG WIFE: "You are sure there are five pounds of sugar in this package? It seems very light."

Grocer: "That, madam, is because it is entirely free from sand."

---

LIVERIED MENIAL: "Me lud, the carriage waits without."

Lord Fitz-Josher: "Without what?"

Liveried Menial: "Without horses, me lud; 'tis a motor-car."

---

THE other day a gentleman entered a restaurant, and ordered a chicken. The chicken was evidently tough, for, when the waiter came in, he beheld the gentleman with his coat off and in a great state of perspiration.

"Waiter," he said, "this chicken is very tough."

"Very sorry, sir; but, you see, that chicken always was a peculiar bird. Why, when we came to kill it we couldn't catch it, so at last we had to shoot it. It flew on the housetop, and——"

"Then you must have shot the weathercock by mistake."


# TWO BOOKS TO TAKE ON HOLIDAYS.

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AND THE
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**C. ARTHUR PEARSON Limited, Henrietta Street, W.C.**


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# MISS JOHNSON'S PLAN.

ONE of the most striking characteristics of woman is her cheerful perseverance is looking under the bed for a thief. No man in his senses ever looks under his bed for a burglar, but there are millions of women in this country who would find it quite impossible to sleep in any bed under which they had not previously searched for a concealed man.

Experience is lost upon them. The average unmarried woman, of forty years of age, has usually looked under the bed at least 7,500 times, without ever once finding the expected man; but she is not the least discouraged by so long a course of failure, and it would be easy to find women, eighty or ninety years old, who still nightly search for the man they have never found.

Miss Johnson will hereafter be famous as a woman whose long perseverance has been signally rewarded. It would be indelicate to inquire into her precise age; had she not described herself, in a recent affidavit, as having been born in the year 1848? And we may therefore take it for granted that she is at least fifty-two years old.

If we presume that she began to look under the bed at the age of fifteen, it follows that she has performed that ceremony more than 14,000 times.

Until the other Friday night, she never found the smallest fragment of a man under her bed; but on that eventful night her perseverance was rewarded, and the long-sought man greeted her astonished gaze.

Miss Johnson, being an unmarried lady, not wholly unconnected with the milliner's trade, and full of womanly independence, resides entirely alone, in a small house containing but three rooms—a kitchen, shop, and bedroom.

Dogs she despises, and cats she mistrusts; while, as for men, she regards them as poor creatures who may possibly have their uses in the time of hard frost, when water must be carted from the nearest stream, but who, as a rule, make more trouble about a house than their necks are worth.

Holding these views, it naturally follows that Miss Johnson lives alone, and the cool bravery with which she locks up her house at night, and seeks her solitary couch (no matter if a first-class thunderstorm is in progress) has for years been the admiration of the more timid of her sex.

It was about eleven o'clock on that Friday night when Miss Johnson stooped down and looked under the bed for a possible man, precisely as she had done on 14,000 previous nights.

Whether she was or was not astonished at perceiving a large-sized man lying under the bed, with the back of his head towards her, will never be known, but at any rate, she gave no sign of astonishment, and did not even inform the man that she saw him.

On the contrary, she resumed with great deliberation the nocturnal twisting of her back-hair, and even softly hummed "Come into the Garden, Maud," with as much distinctness as could be expected of a woman while holding a comb between her teeth.

Her back hair being finally finished, she opened her window, turned down the lamp until it gave forth a dim and modest light, and then stepped gracefully into bed, but not to sleep.

The sagacious woman was perfectly aware that the man under the bed, not suspecting that he had been discovered, would creep forth with a view to plunder so soon as he thought that she was asleep.

The bedstead stood in a corner of the room, and from the position of the man it was plain that he would creep out at the side of the bed. Miss Johnson, therefore, changed her usual manner of composing herself to rest, and lay, as she subsequently expressed it, "flat as a pancake," with her head projecting over the side of the bed at the precise locality where she expected the man to appear.

For at least half-an-hour she lay perfectly still, watching for the man with a stealthy vigilance that would have done credit to an astute and experienced cat.

Not a muscle or a hairpin on her frame moved, and her breathing was as slow and regular as that of a profound sleeper. At length the man, confident that she was asleep, softly began to worm himself from under the bed.

Little did he imagine that a pair of pitiless grey eyes were waiting for the appearance of his head, while a pair of lithe and nervous hands were ready to pounce upon his ears.

It was not many minutes, however, before each ear was suddenly caught in an inexorable grasp and his head began to oscillate with remarkable speed between the floor and the edge of the bedstead.

Von Moltke himself could not have surpassed Miss Johnson's tactics. She had the man completely at her mercy, and he was as helpless as though his head were in the stocks.

At first his captor maintained a grim silence, but after she had bumped him sufficiently to ease her mind she addressed him on the wickedness and folly of seeking to rob her.

In vain did the man protest that his motives were innocent, that he had mistaken the house, and had merely intended to take a quiet nap under his own bedstead where the flies could not find him out.

Miss Johnson sternly told him that he could not make her believe any such nonsense, and that she would "let him know," and would also "show him."

These threats were carried out by a renewal of the bumping process, until the man yelled for mercy so loudly that the neighbours were aroused, and rushed to Miss Johnson's house with the firm conviction that a gang of burglars had murdered that excellent woman and were quarrelling over the division of her spoils.

It was not until a strong force, armed with clubs and hatchets, had recklessly entered the room, that Miss Johnson surrendered her captive, with the remark that the sooner they took themselves off the better, and that if any other man would like to hide under the bed, she was quite ready to knock a little sense into him.

Thus the intrepid woman not only defended herself with the most signal success, but she pointed out the true way to deal with a man under the bed.

F. P. W.

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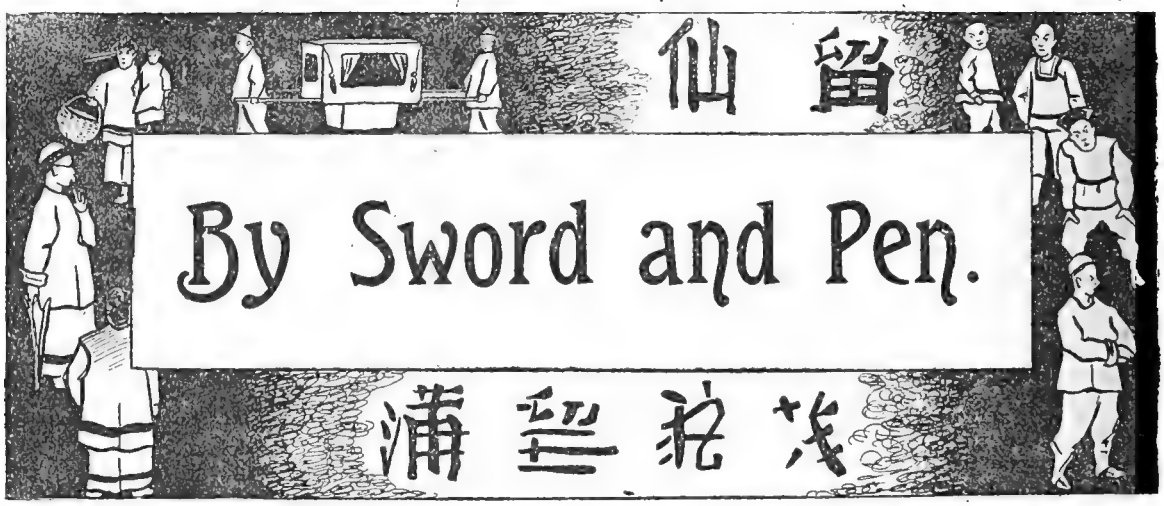


"GALLANTLY done!" said General Galway as the tail end of Captain Murchison's kilt disappeared over the hedge of the zareba.

Our troops had been exposed to a galling fire in approaching this troublesome redoubt, and when at last the word "Char-r-rge" sounded like thunder from the stentorian voice of the officer commanding, the men hesitated for a moment on account of their heavy casualties.

It was at this critical moment (for, paradoxical as the remark may appear, armies are something like women! —they who hesitate are lost) that Captain Murchison, brandishing his claymore high over his head shouted:

"No. 1 Company, Skeandhu Regiment—follow me."

The men were at once electrified by the voice of the charmer, for wherever Captain Murchison would lead, his men were sure to follow, even to the gates of the ill-reputed habitation whose pavements are not inlaid with jasper. But burdened by their rifles and ammunition, their beloved centurion was far away in front of the fastest of them, and jumping over the frowning barrier before a single bayonet could come up to his support.

"Heaven preserve the brave fellow," was the very natural remark of those of us on the staff who were witnesses of the scene, as we watched the daring-deed and thought of the almost certain death awaiting for Murchison inside.

But the Skeandhu Regiment was never wanting in dash or daring, and before the Dervishes could recover from their surprise at this flying woman flopping down so suddenly among them, as if from the blue, in all her glory of tartan petticoats, the men of No. 1 Company Skeandhu Regiment were tearing with their bare legs through cactus and thorn, as if they were as inocuous as weeping willows.

There are few people braver than the Dervishes of the desert, more especially at close quarters. Here, however, they had met their match. It was bayonet against spear.

But though the latter had much the advantage in both length and hurling power, the formidable "point" of the British weapon, with the furious "h-i-s-s" that drove it home, was a little too much for the Dervishes. And so, after stubbornly contesting the ground for a space, they broke precipitately, as if pursued by the feminine fiends of their own Gehenna, turned white for the purpose.

"Poor beggar," said the General, kindly, after the fight was over and we were making up the butcher's bill. "He's gone at last. I always feared that this would be the end of him; he was so altogether reckless in his courage."

"I'm not dead yet, sir," replied the corpse in a weak ghostly whisper that startled the General, brave though he was.

It was the voice of Captain Alastair Murchison, recovering from a dead faint, the result of gaping wounds and loss of blood.

"Heaven be praised, my boy," with deep emotion replied the warm hearted General. "It's a Victoria Cross for you, dead or alive, or any recommendation of mine is not worth much."

* * * * *

The scene was changed.

In a small provincial town not a hundred miles away from Charing Cross might be seen a soldierly figure, with a wooden leg and a cramped left forearm.

He lived in a small, self-contained villa whose outward appearance betokened respectability, but which was but scantily furnished within. It was the property of Mr. Abraham Grabb and the new home of poor Captain Murchison of the Soudan zareba.

"Never mind, my dear," he cheerily remarked to his wife, on first taking possession, "I was formerly in the habit of dallying with Literature for amusement, but I shall now woo the coy dame for the sake of her siller. Now don't be jealous, darling," he continued, "that's a good lassie," as he playfully patted his partner in life on the shoulder.

He glanced at his maimed members, though, with an air of sadness that was far from his natural disposition.

"See," he went on with a somewhat forced smile, "though I have lost a leg and lamed an arm, my head and my right hand are as dexterous as ever."

"Thank Heaven they are, darling," returned his wife with tears in her beautiful eyes, "and your heart also is as warm and true."

"Why not?" he rejoined; "fickle hearts are only made for fair weather."

Yet Captain Murchison's heart had not a little reason to feel sour and disappointed.

Having served his country for many years, and on

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several occasions distinguished himself by his gallantry, he had now been shelved with but little compensation, as of no further use.

Blessed with little or no private means of his own, like many others of his kind, he had received from the grand-motherly Goverment the miserable pittance of a half-pay Captain *plus* the mite of compassionate allowance on account of his irreparable wounds. And so, with this dole, he was allowed to sink or swim without any further consideration.

True, in addition to this, the Victoria Cross brought him the magnificent honorarium of £10 sterling a year. For I am now speaking of a period before the doughty Piper Findlater of Dargai fame conferred a real boon on his brother Croziers by opening the eyes of Whitehall to the very obvious fact that disabled heroes cannot like chameleons live on air, but must feed and fare like other folk.

He forced, in fact, the powers that be, to raise the yearly honorarium to the more substantial sum of £50, in order to save the said occult powers from the spectacle of witnessing their national heroes tramping the country in funny little groups as strolling players, with their vaunted decorations dangling on their breasts!

To make matters worse, Murchison commuted a great part of his pension, and with the small capital thereby obtained, ventured on business with the old incautious courage and—with the old and usual results.

The promoters of the Hubble-Bubble Company were far too 'cute for the chivalrous soldier. Moreover, like many other aspirants to literary wealth and fame, the labours of Captain Murchison were more earnest than lucrative, till he began to realize like the poet Gray, that:

> Too poor for a bribe and too proud to importune
> He had not the method of making a fortune.

Morning after morning he had the mortification of listening to the "flop, flop" of his typed manuscripts as the post passed them through the panel of the front door which was only, alas, too close to his very modest study.

And though all of them were "returned with thanks" from the very polite editors, it was but poor consolation for the struggling would-be author. Indeed, these flops on the floor became gradually to sound more like pop-guns to his ears, and to grate on his nerves more than the fusillade of his enemies used to do in more stirring times.

"Here they come—flop, flop—" he would say to his wife at the simple breakfast board, as the typical knock of the postman and the equally typical flop of the manuscripts almost reached their ears together. "But never say die; people will read me some day in spite of them."

He was a man of wide travel, varied adventure, rich fancy, and a dauntless determination that was not easily disheartened.

On a certain morning, as he was sipping his cocoa in the usual way, he picked something out of one of the familiar foolscap envelopes and threw it on the table before his wife.

"There, Grace," he said, with a perceptible tremor in his voice, "*there*, I told you so. Perseverance surmounts difficulties and the copy-book maxims are true after all."

It was the proof for correction of his very whimsical story of *Venus and Bellerophon* which had been rejected, with kindest thanks, of course, by at least half-a-dozen mediocre periodicals, but was at last accepted by none

*Mr. RUSSELL has much pleasure in calling attention to the following Press Notices that have been recently published in the leading newspapers. Copies of the journals containing the Original Notices, and many hundred others, are on view at Woburn House.*

# A SLANDER ON FAT PEOPLE.

OBESITY IS NOT THE RESULT OF GLUTTONY.

## CAN OBESITY BE REMOVED?

"It is high time that the old and false idea that excessive corpulency is a thing to be endured because it cannot be banished without danger to the general health should be got rid of once for all. Equally pernicious is the idea for which some of our comic poets and humourous painters are partially responsible, that too much rotundity of figure adds either to the dignity of the person or the cheerful aspect of its owner. . . . These very practical considerations are suggested by the perusal of an excellently written and most suggestive little volume, entitled 'Corpulency and the Cure.' The book is in its eighteenth edition, and the reason of this popularity is not far to seek. Its author, Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. (who will send a copy to any applicant who encloses 4d. in stamps), has devised a method of treatment which he clearly describes, giving, in fact, the actual formula of the remedy which he prescribes. A work of this sort is naturally being largely recommended by persons who have benefited by its treatment to others who are still sufferers from adiposity. Mr. Russell asks all who are experimenting with his remedy to weigh themselves carefully every day. For the results he appeals not to the fancied feelings of the patients, but to the hard testimony of scales and weights, which cannot be suspected of any prejudice in favour of Mr. Russell's system. Such tests show, as a matter of fact, the loss of from 1lb. to 2lb. per day, directly the remedy begins to be used. This is a perfectly harmless decoction, prepared from a few herbs which one can find in the rural lane."—*South Wales Daily News*, June 15th, 1900.

## MARVELLOUS RESULTS IN CURING CORPULENCY BY THE "RUSSELL" TREATMENT.

"'Corpulency and the Cure.'—This is the title of an interesting volume (256 pages) which has been written by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., and it deals in a common-sense fashion with a subject which is of considerable moment to a large number of people. Mr Russell has devoted more study than perhaps any other medical expert to the question of obesity, and his unique experience in the treatment of the thousands of cases that have come under his care has conclusively shown him the falsity of the idea that excessive corpulence is a thing that must be endured because it cannot be banished without danger to the general health. He has proved that quite the contrary is the case, and the hundreds of testimonials which are given in the book constitute an unanswerable testimony to the efficacy of his remedy. Mr. Russell handles his subject with the skill of a master, but withal he uses such simple language that all may understand, and his book is full of useful information. He points out that in most of the so-called remedies for adiposity the administration of deleterious compounds is advocated, or that adherence to some more or less objectionable or stringent forms of dietary or abstinence is insisted upon. Having given the subject constant attention for many years, Mr Russell has succeeded in producing and perfecting a purely vegetable preparation which is guaranteed to be perfectly harmless, while he claims that it reduces superfluous fat in such an unerring manner that 24 hours is usually a sufficient time to test its efficacy by stepping on a weighing machine. In short, the advantages of Mr Russell's method may thus be summed up: the compound is purely vegetable and perfectly harmless; it does not demand those semi-starvation dietary restrictions which are so weakening to the system; it is most efficacious in reducing fat without injury; and it aims at the radical cure of obesity, so that when persons under treatment have been reduced to their normal weight the incubus may not return. Moreover, the treatment is an exceedingly pleasant one. The medicine which is prescribed is an agreeble, refreshing, cooling, invigorating tonic, and allays thirst in a marvellous manner. It is purely vegetable, contains no poison, has no pernicious effect on the most delicate subject, is free from objection of any kind, and is neither aperient, constipating, weakening, nor sickly. It is sufficient that Mr Russell's book has reached its eighteenth edition, and is certainly well worth reading. It can be obtained by sending four penny stamps to the address as above. Amongst the numerous unsolicited letters which Mr. Russell is daily receiving, mention may be made of one from Mr. F. Upton, of Brazil, who says: 'I have over 100 persons here under your treatment, and, without one single exception, all with most satisfactory results.' This is testimony indeed."—Extract from *The Bristol Mercury*, June 16th, 1900.

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other than the *Hurry-up Magazine*, the very tip-top of the whole caboodle.

His heart bounded with joy.

"Dada, dear," said a little boy beside him, "me get new boots now."

The appeal of his little son suddenly roused him to a sense of his downfall, and he was for a moment almost bursting into tears.

But recollecting himself, he caught his son passionately in his once powerful arms and nearly smothered him with kisses.

"Yes, Charlie, that you will, my boy, and at no distant date."

The date was more distant than he expected.

The greedy Mr. Grabb was clamouring for his rent, and the overdue taxes were also to pay. Moreover, the inimitable story of *Venus and Bellerophon* took an unconscionable long time to appear in the coveted columns of the great *Hurry-up Magazine*, and other contributions that were being tardily accepted by other periodicals seemed to share the same fate, till hope deferred was enough to make him feel sick at heart in earnest.

Little Charlie was still without his boots, and the rent was still to pay, though Mr. Grabb was getting more and more abusive.

"I 'ave 'ad hexperience o' the likes of yer before," the latter went on one fine morning, "gintlemans as 'ave plinty of pride and hempty pockets. But I'll manage yer, and out of this 'ere 'ouse ye'll trouse or my name ain't Mister Abraham Grabb."

Murchison once upon a time would probably have trounced if not "trousedˮ Mister Abraham Grabb on the spot for his insolence. Yet here was this ursurer, who would probably run into a hole if he were ever shown the muzzle of a musket—here, I say, he was feeding on the fat of the land, and actually at that moment more capable on his legs than the Victoria Cross hero, who had practically lost his all in the cause of his country.

Yes, the house of Mister Abraham Grabb, though jerry built withal, and not at all free from rats, was a little too luxurious for the very modest means at their disposal. They must go seek diggings somewhere else, and as the rent due to Mr. Grabb was still to pay, these same quarters must be of the humblest description.

It was indeed painful to watch the poor Captain, as jog, jog, went his noisy wooden leg when ascending the bare wooden staircase which led to the upper story, where they had been compelled to take refuge from the importunate Mr. Grabb.

For the first few days the disabled officer was occupied in setting his little curiosities in order. But no sooner was that done than he began again to crave for literature.

It was then that he first missed the sound of the dull thud of his returned contributions in the early mornings; and it struck him all of a heap that they were still undergoing the same process through the door of his late dwelling.

His appeal to the previous landlord was no use whatever, for the latter had already locked the premises, and was not likely to open them again for his late tenant.

"Fork out yer tin, yer loafer," was that gentleman's reply. "But fork or fork no, yer niver see the hinside of that 'ere 'ouse again."

What could be done?

Captain Murchison had no lien whatever on the house—quite the contrary; and no legal power could therefore compel the ruthless landlord to yield. Yet the thing must needs be done. On the principle, therefore, that "necessity knows no laws," Murchison for the first time in his knowledge deliberately broke the laws of his country, *à la* Bill Sykes.

And except for the gravity of the occasion, it would have been a truly ludicrous sight to watch him on a certain night creeping through the window, with his helpless wooden leg literally *sticking* out behind him!

There at the back of the door he found the floor strewn with returned manuscripts, accepted proofs, and, (oh, glorious sight!) a copy of the premier *Hurry-up Magazine*, with his wonderful tale of "Venus and Bellerophon" occupying the place of honour in its coveted pages.

The man that never trembled in real danger did so here from a curious amalgam of joy and—fear of the policeman!

It had been a drizzly night, however, and good Mr. Bobby of the Beat was at this particular time being gaily regaled in a neighbouring kitchen, and quite oblivious of the presence of the amateur burglar.

And most marvellous sight of all, as he opened a certain brown envelope, lo!——

"A cheque or I'm a Dutchman," he gasped, as he anxiously looked at it in the dim light of the candle he had brought with him. A reaction was his when on looking more minutely he discovered that like most of the other papers, the cheque had been so gnawed by the rats that it was—not negotiable.

In much trepidation (and fear of the policeman) he threw everything into his handbag, put out the candle, cautiously crept out through the window, and hurried home.

There was joy in that upper storey that night, for though the cheque was not negotiable in its present tatterdemalion state, it required only a little time to return it and get another in its place. The tale of "Venus and Bellerophon" became quite the rage of the silly season, and was the very making of the gallant Captain in his new sphere.

He got his innings at last, and so stuck to his stumps, that he is now as famous for his pen as he once was for his doughty claymore.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN MACGREGOR.


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# The Brain Gymnasium

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, August 27th, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

## No. 193.

I am the beginning of creation and the end of the world, but also the middle of now. What am I?

## No. 194.

Re-arrange the figures 1 to 16 so that the columns, added upwards, horizontally, and diagonally, each make 34.

## No. 195.

Form a word-diamond from equivalents of the following: A consonant; to place; a fruit; an adverb; a consonant.

## No. 196.

The following letters, when re-arranged, will form a double word-square, the connecting word of which is an English town:

AAAA B DDD EEEEEE M NNNNN OOOOOO RR T VV W Z.

## No. 197.

Befrilled and fair, my FIRST appeared;
You scarcely would have dreamed
That from the brine and densest smoke
The FIRST had been redeemed.

My next, at best, a counterfeit,
Though real it may appear;
It also means: to ridicule,
To disappoint, or jeer.

My WHOLE in summer's often found
'Neath shade of spreading trees;
Affected much by those whose home
Is on the rolling seas.

## No. 198.

The following is a grammatical sentence. What is it?

C
TEMPT
SA SA

## RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 175 to 180.

The prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mrs. Cooke, of Portswood House, Kew Gardens, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "At a Winter's Fire," by Bernard Capes, has been sent to:

F. G. Melville, Totterdown.
H. B. Thompson, Bracknell.
H. Quinton, Southampton.
Mrs. Bowden, Battersea, S.W.
J. S. Ryan, East Ham, E.
D. G. Jelley, Plumstead.
W. J. Barter, Cork.
Miss G. Nash, Brixton Hill.
F. J. Turner, Wolverhampton.
J. H. Heeley, Seaforth.

## SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES.

Nos. 181 to 186.

No. 181. When it is $\frac{2}{7}$ of S—IX—TEEN.

No. 182. Eleven seconds.

No. 183. Brook, rook, hook.

No. 184.

B L E W
L A V A
E V E R
W A R D E N S
E V E N
N E R O
S N O W

No. 185. Nowhere.

No. 186.

PORTSMOUTH.
P ortugal
O use
R embrandt
T ay
S icily
M oscow
O porto
U ral
T iber
H ull


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"It is a lovely machine, and **well worth the advertised price of £23.**"—R. Oliver Jones, Rhayader, October 29th, 1898.

"I have asked a practical cyclist to examine it, and he tells me it is quite **worth your listed price (£23).**"—J. H. Alves, Spalding, February 6th, 1899.

"According to the views of several experienced cyclists, it is **fully worth the fifteen pounds.**"—J. W. Swindale, Motherwell, March 2nd, 1899.

"The machine is a real beauty, and **well worth the advertised price (£23).**"—J. Dawson, Blackpool, July 17th, 1899.

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"Three years ago I bought one of your machines **(£18 10s.),** and I cannot speak too highly of it."—Samuel Dennels, Crewe.

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"This machine you have sent me is a great deal better than one by a very well-known firm for which I gave **£16.**"—Rev. W. G. Edwards, Southampton.

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"I have shown it to several cycling friends, and they all think it **well worth £15.**"—L. F. Glynn, Slough, July 10th, 1900.

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"It was sent to a **large cycle agent** near here to be looked at, who did not know of your cycles, and the manager greatly praised it."—Capt. Walter Poynder, Southsea, February 28th, 1899.

"I have experience of many makes of machine, being a **district agent** of the ———, and having business transactions with R— W—, R—, H—, S—, and other companies, but a chance ride on one of your machines has convinced me of their superiority."—P. Shanahan, Killucan, West Meath.

"**An expert** who has overhauled it expresses a high opinion of it."—Rev. S. H. Smith, Berks.

"I am happy to inform you that your bicycle met with his decided approval, although he builds bicycles himself."—E. Robson, Northumberland, December 23rd, 1898.

"**Several experts** were looking at it, and they express a very favourable opinion of it."—W. Browne, co. Down, February 21st, 1899.

"One of the oldest riders in our club examined it yesterday. He has several makes himself, he is an **expert engineer,** and he was very much pleased with the fittings and bearings."—Jno. H. Worthington, Preston, April 26th, 1899.

"I have seen and examined the cycle you supplied to Mr. G. Oakley, and am delighted with it."—A. Whitworth, **Cycle Agent,** Deepcar, Sheffield, April 20th, 1899.

"A rider of several years' standing, after **critically examining** the machine, told me it is as perfect as it is possible to build a machine."—E. T. Brickwell, Scarborough, May 25th, 1899.

"I called in **an expert,** asking him to go over it carefully, and note any fault he might detect. His verdict was, for easy running, good material and high finish, it could not be beaten."—William Ostler, Weston, September 20th, 1899.

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